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THE NEW GREATNESS

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THE NEW GREATNESS

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My Dear Mr. Williams:

In Brooklyn, many years ago, you first crossed my path. I was "fresh" from the country; you were wise in the ways of the Big City. Perhaps my "freshness" made particular appeal to your protecting tenderness. Or, perhaps, it was just your lifelong habit of lending yourself to others that spontaneously urged you to lend yourself to me. And yet, I still must believe, you invested yourself in me with a special kindliness. The son of a noble minister of Christ, you most generously warmed toward one who was also a minister—young, venturesome, movingly callow! Well, whatever it was that caused our paths to converge, I am increasingly grateful for that hour, that day, and the years between. Inasmuch as you exemplify in your own life and spirit "The New Greatness," I am claiming the privilege of associating your name with this volume.

Faithfully yours,
Frederick F. Shannon.

To Mr. Arthur Williams,
The New York Edison Company,
New York City, N. Y.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The New Greatness	1
II.	God in the Cornfields	18
III.	The Light of Life	32
IV.	The Venture of Faith	47
V.	An Unforgetable Queen	58
VI.	The Soul's Unpaid Debts	69
VII.	A Sunset Life	80
VIII.	The Higher Tones of Thanksgiving	88
IX.	The Juniper Tree	100
X.	Christ's Kingdom	111
XI.	The Heaven Opened	122
XII.	A Great Woman	140

THE NEW GREATNESS

THE NEW GREATNESS

I

THE NEW GREATNESS

And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats.—I Sam. xxv. 2.

Whosoever would become great among you shall be your servant; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your bond-servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.—St. Matt. xx. 27, 28.

THE man in the first passage is Nabal; the man in the second is Jesus. Strangely enough, Nabal means "senseless"; and gloriously enough, Jesus means Savior, being the angel-named: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, because He shall save His people from their sins." Both texts introduce the subject of greatness as well as representing the two poles thereof. Nabal was "very great" in what he had; Jesus in what He was and is and shall be forevermore.

Thus do our texts thrust an undying theme before us. Greatness, like certain musical compositions, is a historic tune with many variations. "To be great," said Emerson, "is to be misunderstood." That may be true; and yet to be great requires more than to be misunderstood. Eccentricity of genius may win ample

misunderstanding. Why, in the light of Christ, has not the very idea of greatness been so cheapened and vulgarized that it needs to be recoined in the mints of reality? The fact is, if the Christian God is to be taken at all seriously, about seven-tenths of history's so-called great ones are not great at all. It all depends upon what scales you weigh them in. Measured by the Nabal standard, they occupy a good deal of space, to be sure. But measured by Christ's standard, there is reason to think that they will have to view Heaven's Hall of Fame from afar. So, following the lead of my two texts, I want to consider with you their opposing conceptions of greatness—the new as set over against the old.

I

By way of contrast, let us first think of the old conception of greatness. "There was a man in Maon, whose business was in Carmel; and he was very great; he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats." Making due allowance for the age, the pastoral setting and atmosphere of the thought and words, nevertheless, is not the ordinary idea of greatness enclosed within this verbal form? Cracking the shell of the phrases, we seem to find this thought within: Here was a man who was very great because he owned a large sheep and goat farm—that is, the dimensions of a man may be taken by the foot-rule of things. Or, to express it somewhat differently, greatness is a matter of possessions and position.

Consider this from a national viewpoint. Was not Egypt very great because she had dynasties and the rich valley of the Nile? Was not Chaldea very great because of her monarchies and tower-temples built by Urukh? Was not Assyria very great because of her royal cities and palaces? Was not Babylonia very great

because of her Hanging Gardens in Babylon and that Temple of the Seven Spheres at Borsippa? Was not Phœnicia very great because of her trading-posts, colonies, and ships that whitened the paths of every sea? Was not Persia very great because of her land and naval armaments, her conquests, and the pride that looks forth from this legend on the tomb of Darius: "Darius, the Great King, the King of kings; the king of all inhabited countries; the king of this great earth, far and near; the son of Hystaspes, an Achæmenian; a Persian, the son of a Persian; an Aryan, of Aryan descent?"

Thus the story runs for Greece and Rome also. But it does not stop there. Inquire of Russia, Germany, Italy, France, and England what is the meaning of national greatness, and their reply, notwithstanding the fine and beautiful and lofty traits in all of them, is largely in the spirit and ideal of this old story: "There was a man in Maon, whose business was in Carmel; and he was very great; he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats."

"But you have not mentioned America in relation to this ancient category of greatness!" I hear someone exclaim. And you are right, my friend; in this appraisal America cannot be ignored. It is those who truly love America who think most wisely of her and deal most faithfully with her. One of the hopeful things about genuine Americans is this: They have gotten bravely over that sophomoric, Fourth-of-July, right-or-wrong, platitudinous, and boastful spirit much in vogue in the days of our erstwhile national isolation. Because they believe in God and justice and brotherhood; because they hate phariseeism in a nation as they despise it in an individual; because they know that whatsoever a nation sows that shall it also reap—because of these and kindred considerations, true Americans are thinking of our international responsi-

bility and not at all approvingly of our un-American and shameful record since November, 1918. The moment the Armistice was signed, our vociferous politicians, aided by those who secretly or openly opposed our warfare on German militarism, began the malicious and partisan drive which is largely responsible for four of our most inglorious years as a nation. And were not some of these very gentlemen vocally aggrieved and horrified because we did not take our stand even sooner on the side of our Allies? We lacked red blood, they said. We were selfish, blind, without national leadership. Was not this the burden of the penny-a-liners and self-seeking politicians, eagerly biding the time when they might rush in and save the soul of America?

Well, they rushed in—and then they rushed out! Having sent the flower of our manhood across the seas to help make the world safe for democracy, we scarcely allowed the grass to grow green upon their thousands of graves before we began creeping back into our shell of traditionalism. "America first!" became our watchword, our meat, and drink; while "This agony must not be gone through with again!" became a fading memory, a burst of idealism that could not stand the light of our degenerate day. When our Ambassador to England brazenly told the world that America entered the war to save herself, there were protests, of course, but they soon fell by the wayside while Colonel Harvey prattled editorially on. But why should we be so severe upon our Ambassador and so lenient with ourselves? You and I are the guilty ones. Had it not been for our own national backsliding, such a man never would have seen the Court of St. James. Was he not hatched from political eggs laid in the nest of hatred—and is it not a proverb that chickens, no matter what their color or cackle, will come home to roost? There is abundant room in

America, my friends, for difference of opinion on national policies as well as in interpreting the Constitution; but there should be no room whatever for such partisan brawls and personal hatreds as have blackened our record in these recent years.

What, in such an atmosphere, is the real menace of America? It is this: that we may so harden our national soul that some future antiquarian, digging amid the ruins of New York or Chicago, shall pause to reflect: "There was a country in the western world, whose business was for herself; and she was very great; she had cities and farms and banks and ships and railroads." In other words, the inevitable destroyer of nations is the sheep-and-goat idea of greatness. And to deepen the menace, all such people are invariably overtaken by national blindness. They cannot and will not see themselves as they are; they are expert in throwing stones at other nations, oblivious that they themselves live in a house of glass. For example, here is this cartoon called, "Our Greatest War Casualty." The first picture represents America's war ideals, led by the Goddess of Liberty and our embattled soldiers. The second picture shows a group of blear-eyed men, standing around a foreign grave with these words on the tombstone: "America's War Ideals Killed by European Politicians Since Armistice Day, 1918."

But what about American politicians? If America's war ideals died, were they killed solely by European diplomats? It is easy to pass the blame to someone else; but in retrospect, sober-minded Americans have reached the conviction that if our war ideals had not also been betrayed by the enemy within, a vast amount of the international disaster since 1918 might have been averted. What America needs is somebody to tell her the truth about herself, so that she may forsake her rôle of a national peeping Tom and take her

place in the giving, as well as in the getting, process of all peoples. Mark my words, he is not the true lover of his country who shouts: "My country, right or wrong!" Faithful are the wounds of a friend; and faithful, thrice faithful, are those citizens of America who are determined that she shall face her new world obligations in the spirit of the Pilgrim and the Pioneer, refusing to make terms with the discreditable and reactionary movement which has already deeply shadowed our national well-being. "We cannot," says Secretary Hughes, thinking of international conditions, "dispose of these problems by calling them European. They are world problems, and we cannot escape the injurious consequences of a failure to settle them."

Dwelling for a moment longer on this obsolete conception of greatness, are we not historically aware of its bearing on the individual also? Who was the great man of olden years? Was he not, like Nabal, a mere sheep-and-goat man? He had possessions and position. His name is Esarhaddon, or Alexander, or Pompey, or Cæsar, or Napoleon, or the Kaiser that was. But, as a matter of history, do not sheer possessions and position in nations and individuals invariably spell false power? Promising more than they can deliver, they end in disillusionment, chaos, anarchy, and death. "Ye know," said the Master to James and John, "that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. *Not so shall it be among you.*" Surely, in these words the forlorn old materialistic universe is turning over a new page in the writing of its autobiography. We are slow enough in understanding the fresh beginnings for human life and destiny expressed in these epoch-making words of our Lord; but we shall grow up to them some of these ages. And when we do, we will look back upon our exploded conceptions of greatness for nations and individuals some-

what as a philosopher thinks of the rhymes he learned in the nursery. Two hundred years ago the tomb of Charlemagne, king of the Franks and emperor of the Romans, was opened. Clothed in imperial robes and with a scepter in his hand, he is seated on a marble slab. A New Testament lies open on his knee, and his dead finger is pointing to the words in St. Mark's Gospel: "For what doth it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life?" Yea, what doth it profit a nation to become rich and powerful beyond the dreams of Assyria and Rome, if she forfeits her honor, if she betrays her national brethren in the stupendous task of world-shaping and world-justice? "The test of every American must always be, not where he is, but what he is"; "What we seek is the reign of law, based upon the consent of the governed, and sustained by the organized opinion of mankind"—that is the way we talked in the great days that tried men's souls. Then there were men white with wrath because, as they said, we went late into the battle. I think we went in at the right time; but what has happened to these gentlemen whose wrath once knew no bounds? Have they not mysteriously cooled down even while the world has gone on burning up? When a man was loudly repeating that familiar canard about the terrible disgrace of America being so slow in getting into the war, his friend quietly asked: "Well, we got out quickly enough, didn't we?" The first man became suddenly speechless. Perhaps it began to dawn upon him that getting in is not enough; it is staying in, whether by soldiers or statesmen or souls, that counts. O, wake up, America! Otherwise, one of two things is bound to happen: America will either wake up in time to witness the destruction of civilization or too late to attend the resurrection of a humanity long dead because of war. May it never be said of the land of Washington and Lincoln and Wilson: "While America

was busy here and there, mankind starved and warred to death, because, forsooth, America was very great: *she had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats!"*

II

Let us turn now to a consideration of the new ideal of greatness as expressed by our Lord: "Whosoever would become great among you shall be your servant: and whosoever would be first among you shall be your bond-servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." What, then, is the new greatness for men and nations? Why, it is the spirit of service and sacrifice. Are not these the measure of real greatness for both God and man? Let us inquire.

In what does the final or moral greatness of God consist? What is the inmost soul of the Deity? What is that thought of Him which God Himself has slowly thrust into human consciousness? It is this: God is the transcendent and universal servant. "My Father," said the Master, "worketh even until now, and I work." As the context shows, the Master had wrought a good work on the Sabbath day; He had relieved a sick and withered mortal of his infirmity. But having drained off the vitality from a religious rule designed for the welfare of man, the Jews seem to have concluded that, because human beings should rest one day in seven, so God, likewise, must obey the same mandate. "No," answers Jesus, "My Father is the unceasing worker. He is toiling even until now, and I toil."

On the physical plane, is not God everlastingly working on and on? Why, we no longer think of the universe as a colossal engine which was once started out on the highways of space and later abandoned by the Engineer, while the engine rushes wildly on to the

roundhouse of nowhere. No! The Engineer is aboard His engine; He is within the fire and the steam and the wheels; His hand is on the throttle, His eye is on the rail, His mind is aware of the terminal. Look where you choose, and there is a tremendously industrious God at work. In cell, atom, seed, and star; in sod, worm, plant, and sky; in weed, water, wind, and wold; in fin, claw, feather, and wing; in protozoa, metazoa, vertebrate, and mammal; in organism, metabolism, variation, and species; from protoplasm to pleiad, from scum to sun, from dirt to duty—in all, through all, and over all the Eternal Biologist, the Divine Chemist, the Celestial Weaver, the Infinite Artist is æonianly at work. There is no room in the universe for a lazy God, and He Himself has so decreed it. The Christian God thinks so highly of honest, educational, character-unfolding effort that He never does for man what man can do for himself. An idle, untoiling human is the sheer negation of soul. Because, if God could not be God without working always and throughout all realms, how can man ever become the being God intends, if he does not release his hidden, pent-up powers through worthy toil, and in the very process realize whiteness and grandeur of soul? I want to expand this thought later on in our study; but just now let us seize again the truth that the glory and greatness of God are manifested through the service which He is momentarily rendering to worlds, angels, and men.

Otherwise, we know not what to make of the words and deeds of the Master at the last feast of the passover. "And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came forth from God, and goeth unto God, riseth from supper, and layeth aside His garments; and He took a towel, and

girded Himself." Are we surprised? But we should not be! Are we overwhelmed? We would be less than Christian if we were not profoundly moved by this act of the incarnate God. Yet reverently and worshipfully do we ask: How could it be otherwise? Is it not just what we, at our best and in the creative reaches of our souls, have a right to expect of our Lord? Moreover, is it not what the living God has been trying to teach man about His own Godhood the ages through? Mighty facts are here exposed! Weigh them, if you can! But if you can't, adoringly kneel in their presence as you cry: "This is my God forevermore!" For consider: there is, first, the Lord Christ's consciousness of His power: "Knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands." Second, the consciousness of His origin: "And that He came forth from God." Third, the consciousness of His destiny: "And goeth unto God." And now, in the full sweep of His awful self-consciousness, what does Jesus do? Does He stoop? No; He towers! Does He behave like a craven? No; He acts like the Eternal God! Does He frown like an earthly potentate, weighed down by his golden dirt? No; He smiles like the Infinite Beauty and Goodness as He goes on forever serving His creatures of earth and sea and sky! Does He hint that this work is menial? No; He moves among towels and basins and sandals with a majesty that rebukes the empty words that would describe it! Hear it, ye men and nations, stabbed to death by artificial swords and bled white by phantasms of power! Our Lord *"took a towel, and girded Himself. Then He poureth water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded."*

Let me ask again: How are we going to construe this act which is a part of the soul-furniture of the

centuries? There is but one explanation: The Master is doing in that upper room what God is forever doing in His universe. Here is the greatness of God indeed—He is the untiring and blessed servant of all souls and systems.

Another aspect of the greatness of God is manifested in His self-giving. The Soul of God is essentially sacrificial. The principle is ingrained in the cosmos because it veins the Divine Nature through and through. Some of our theological forefathers, I fancy, have had to spend no little time in the spiritual world apologizing to their fellow-saints for the ungracious and godless way they theologized about God while in this world. Unfortunately some of their theological descendants are still in the land. They characterize themselves as defenders of the faith once delivered to the saints, sometimes forgetting, possibly, that it is their *theory* of the faith, rather than the faith itself, that constrains them to verbally burn heretics while their righteous souls continue "in a frenzy rolling." Ofttimes it is nothing more than what one of the old seers called "an irreligious solicitude for God." Perhaps most of us need to personally reinterpret that instructive scene by the Sea of Tiberias. Even after Peter had been tenderly and memorably restored, he still had marvelous facility for "turning about" instead of following straight on. Looking at John, Peter asked: "Lord, and what shall this man do?" "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" replied the Master. I may be wrong—and if I am, I still trust in that Divine Forgiveness which enables me to forgive—but it does seem to me that if all heresy-hunting Peters, whatever their name or sign, were busier looking at themselves and their Master, they would have less concern about the heretical Johns, who may still be pure in heart, even if Westminsterly unorthodox. For after we have split hairs over all our

problems, is not a loveless soul the final heterodoxy that dooms and damns, both here and yonder?

Meantime, we borrow the sacrificial idea from the Heart of God. It stains the universe with its mystery and beauty and the soul with its passion of redemption. Calvary was outside the city walls because it is eternally inside the Soul of God. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." When we have sounded the deeps and heights of these words, we shall have a clew to stars and suns and matter and motion and mind and heart; for all, all are of God, and God is love—so loves that He *must* give His best, that which conditions and underlies His Godhead—*His Only Begotten Son!* So, stripped down to the marrow of reality, we conclude that the greatness of God consists of service and sacrifice.

Are we not ready, now, to ask our second question: What is greatness in man? And to whom shall we go for an answer, save to the Master Himself? "Whosoever would be great among you"—so runs the new legislation for realms eternal—"shall be your servant; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your bond-servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Now, if we were not so familiar with these words as to be somewhat dull to their meaning, we should be thrilled to the centers of our being by the richness and wonder of it all. Into our sodden world has come something unutterably glorious—a conception that is revising history even while it makes history, and is prophetic of the one solitary way of self-realization for every soul of every age and of every world. For, as in God, so in man greatness is the spirit of service and of sacrifice. "Ye know," said Jesus, "that

the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them." What a verbal glass to turn upon the centuries, as they go groaning by, waving flags and wearing gilt or guilt (spell it either way and you will not miss the fact!). Yonder go Rameses, Belshazzar, Attila, and Tamerlane, all leading their broken, bleeding, destroying cohorts in quest of toys named thrones and bubbles named empires. Here, indeed, is the greatness of the "lords of the Gentiles!" But Time, thank God, under our Great Captain, is tearing away the spangles and tarnishing the crown and dwindling the pomp. Wonder of wonders! It has come to pass that man had better give a crust for love than keep a throne for self; better give a cup of cold water for Christ's little ones than hold the seven seas for glory; better give food and clothing for hungry and cold bodies than operate the mines of Golconda for hoarding wealth to which he must say good-by at the edge of the grave. "The universe is not made," says Bergson, "but is being made continually. It is growing, perhaps indefinitely, by the addition of new worlds." But whether made, unmade, or being made, the universe is on the side of justice, mercy, and humanity. Oh! what fools we are to imagine that we shall find the meaning of life, save as we live to serve and give, even as God and history have told us.

Once there was a man who made a fortune. He had a little boy who was bitten by a mad dog and cured by the Pasteur treatment. Then the boy grew to young manhood and was killed in an interurban railway accident. But what is a fortune, so-called, to a father with a broken heart? Adding more dollars cannot bring a single flake of "the white peace" snowing softly down, unless more dollars mean more service, which, in turn, means more manhood. Sitting one day amid the ashes of desolation, the broken father

was asked by a friend: "Ed, I wonder if you are able to see at last what you ought to see?" The man replied that he wanted to see—and that spirit means much! "Well, then, why don't you build a hospital for crippled children?" "Crippled children?" asked the man. "Are there many crippled children?" His friend advised him to look about and see. To make a long and glorious chapter in child welfare short, a survey has been made by the International Rotarians and they have found that there are more than 300,000 crippled children in England, Ireland, Canada, and the United States. Economically, every human life is valued at $7,000. On that basis, by restoring 200,000 of these crippled children, the Rotarians will add more than a billion dollars to the productive power of society. But what are billions, compared to the fund of joy and hope and love that will be created by these servants of humanity? Ask Edgar F. Allen, and his fellow-Rotarians. They will tell you, authentically coming from the laboratory of experience in a mighty task already begun, that business can only be understood and appreciated as business is made to serve the interests of social amelioration and human brotherhood.

Whether they delve in the buried coal, or plow the upland soil,
Or man the seas, or measure the suns, hail to the men who toil!
O toiling brothers, the earth around, we are working together with God!
With God, the Infinite Toiler, Who dwells with His humblest ones,
And tints the dawn and the lily, and flies with the flying suns,
And forever through love and service, though days may be drear and dim,
Is guiding the whole creation up from the depths to Him!

The correlative of true service is sacrifice. "Even as the Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many." These words, in their setting, always suggest to me what one dares to call the double atonement. Transcendently, of course, there is the solitary, unique death on Calvary. Whatever the changing theories of men about the death of Christ, the human heart will always beat true to its inmost meaning. For the heart knows and understands, even while the head may be in a far country tending philosophic swine, and, perhaps, other four-footed beasts and creeping things. And the heart affirms that our Lord's death, in an absolutely sublime and unapprochable way, has to do with human sin—that dirty dirt which men have tossed into the wheels of life and cannot ever entirely remove by their own helpless fingers!

Yet, because of that historic and always available atonement on Calvary, there is a human atonement also. You and I, and every mortal, may and must assist in making it; and it can only be made through sacrifice. We are told that the only authorized Alpine rope has a red strand running through it from end to end. It is likewise true that the only rope that will hold us as we climb the steeps of life is crimson inside and out. Yet, O my friends, this way greatness lies—at home or abroad, on land or sea, in office or shop, in market-place or drawing-room. It is in the mother who yearns over her daughter; in the father who suffers with his son; in the lover who gives himself for his beloved; in the philanthropist who toils early and late that he may help the down-trodden; in the missionary who leaves home and friends to tell backward peoples of the blessed Savior. Having spent years alone in Africa, stricken thirty times with fever, attacked by lions and ambushed by natives, eating everything from ants to rhinoceri, this modern soul-conqueror confesses: "I would gladly go through the

same experiences again for the joy of teaching these people to know the Savior." Mark well these words! Do you notice what a marvelous reason he gives for his readiness to go through it all again? *"For the joy!"* Willing to endure fevers and wild beasts and savage peoples—for what? *For the joy*—for the joy of doing something, even of telling these ignorant ones of the Savior of the world. John saw a great door opened in Heaven; and here the universe, with all of its heavens, seems to open and disclose its inmost genius. Is there not, within the worlds, something unspeakably compensating, without money and without price? If our spiritual hands are big enough to find the right faucet, we can turn on streams of joy that will change our world deserts into flowering gardens of God.

For the joy! Oh, what a clew is this to the mind of God and the heart of Christ! Why did Jesus endure the cross and despise the shame? Why, for the joy that was set before Him. Sounding the depths of being, He brought up the Soul of Things and exposed it to the enchanted gaze of men. The outstanding fact of our day and generation is this: The Lord Christ is climbing over reeling thrones and sinking dynasties and selfish democracies, as He leads humanity on to higher heights of reality, from whence vaster frontiers of brotherhood and world-kinship may be visioned. We may beat about in our modern wilderness of militarism, until the very bones of civilization are bleached white and picked clean by the vultures of war; but make no mistake—the Promised Lands of Right are and will be unimpaired, and if we are not worthy to enter in and possess them, out of the stones of the desert God will raise up a world-citizenship that will neither tolerate nor learn war any more forever!

Yonder in the valley of the kings, on the site of old

Thebes, scientists have unearthed the royal tomb of Tut-ankh-Amen and found a magnificent jeweled throne within. Well, the discovery is symbolic. It is a hint of the flashing cheapness of "the lords of the Gentiles" and "their great ones!" Oh, if you would behold the greatness that waxes and never wanes, go outside the city wall, see the Lord of Glory hanging between the heavens and the earth, giving hope to the hopeless and praying for forgiveness for the unforgiving. Then, retiring into the mystic City of Man-soul, reassure yourself that this spirit—the spirit of service and sacrifice—is the sure password to greatness for nations and individuals, for God and men. It is new—forever and eternally new—because it is true, and it is true because it is rooted in the nature and character of the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity even while He dwells with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.

I saw the conquerors riding by
With cruel lips and faces wan:
Musing on kingdoms sacked and burned
There rode the Mongol Ghengis Khan.

And Alexander, like a god,
Who sought to weld the world in one;
And Cæsar with his laurel wreath;
And like a thing from Hell the Hun;

And, leading like a star, the van,
Heedless of upstretched arm and groan,
Inscrutable Napoleon went,
Dreaming of empire, and alone. . . .

Then all they perished from the earth,
As fleeting shadows from a glass,
And, conquering down the centuries,
Came Christ, the Swordless, on an ass.

II

GOD IN THE CORNFIELDS

And it came to pass, that He was going through the cornfields.—Mark II. 23.

THESE words make the soul tremble with gladness as leaves tremble under the breath of Spring breezes. They cause the heart to send out its tendrils in all directions, and every tendril is a string, and every string is athrob with music. "He was going through the cornfields!" Oh, the witchery, the joy, the poetry, the rhythm of it! It quickens the soul to fine aspirings, to spiritual emotions, to tuneful melodies. Reading these words, if you are a singer, you want to sing. If you are an orator, you want to speak. If you are a violinist, you want to play. If you are a poet, you want to write. If you are a painter, you want to paint. When God in Christ went through the cornfields, there were poems everywhere—poems in the blades of corn, poems in the prattling brooks, poems in the sighing winds, poems in the quivering grasses, poems in the sky-soaring birds—poems everywhither when God walked through the cornfields of old Judea.

Yet the poetry of it, exquisite beyond all telling, fades before the reality of this beautiful scene. You know the poetry of true life is always less than the reality of true life. The reality cannot be spoken, cannot be expressed, because it is always just beyond the limits of expression. Then does poetry wing its way up to the side of reality and say: "O Great Mother

of the Soul, though my voice is sweet and golden, I am incapable of setting forth thy perfect nature; nevertheless, I shall gladly essay to give men hints of thee and of thy glory." And when all vehicles of expression are commissioned into service—when all that art has dreamed, when all that music has suggested, when all that eloquence has spoken, when all that philosophy has formulated, when all is said and done, there is still no adequate revealing of the majesty of ultimate reality. Thus I say the reality of God in the cornfields far outruns the poetry of this sublime pastoral, this divine history of Heaven and earth written out upon nature's mystic pages. I would have us learn three lessons from this golden chronicle: first, God is in the near; second, God is in the far; and, third, the God of the near and the God of the far are both for man.

I

"He was going through the cornfields!" And who is He? Let the winds whisper His name; let the flowers laugh out His beauty; let the little brown seeds dream of His glory; let the songbirds trill over His watchcare; let the blue sky smile down His lovingkindness: for His name is Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace! O heart, is He down in the cornfields? Has He walked down the spaces until His dear feet touch the velvet sod of Mother Earth? And did He come down where things grow, where flowers bloom, where birds sing, where children play, where men and women toil and laugh and love and weep? Yes, let it go and come a thousand times through your hearts this morning—God is down in the cornfields of human life!

And that means God is near, is down where things grow. Nor would I speak irreverently when I say that God's heart must laugh a mighty laugh of joy

every Spring and Summer time. O man, don't you think you would laugh if you could make a leaf—not a great big, green oak or maple leaf, but just a wee, modest, unpretentious leaf, and yet a real leaf? Now, wouldn't you thrill with joy to the ends of your fingertips if you could make just one leaf? And well you might, for never yet was born the man who could make a leaf without God doing the major part of the work. What awful heights and depths of being are sung in Tennyson's words:

> Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies,
> I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
> Little flower—but *if* I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is.

And yet every Spring God grows a million million leaves and flowers out in the cornfields, back in the forests, down in the meadows of earth. Why, truly God is right down here among us watching things grow, going through the cornfields and laughing to the rustling music of the green blades of silken corn.

But—would you believe it?—some folk say that God is not down here, that God is not around at all! Why, your child in the kindergarten knows better than that. I can't divine what is to become of such dullards in another sphere of being, but surely they will have to matriculate at the foot of something like a kindergarten class in the other life. I am sure God is down in the cornfields, and God is always near, even though—

> Dark is the world to thee; thyself art the reason why,
> For is He not all but thou, that hast power to feel "I am I?"
> Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest thy doom,
> Making Him broken gleams and a stifled splendor and gloom.

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

And then, too, the wizardry, the unforgettable note of this cornfield idyl is that God is down where men toil. If I could take your heart in my hand this morning and use the Holy Spirit for a pencil, this is the message I would burn upon it: God is down among the men and the women who work. Somebody has written a poem and called it "New York at Sunset." It suggests the home-going, the home-coming of that vast army of men and women who are, in a unique sense, the throbbing, beating pulse of a planet's commercial life. But do you know I've been wishing someone would write a poem on "New York at Sunrise"—New York in the glad, sweet, silver morning time, when this same noble army of men and women have risen, with their erstwhile tired faces bathed in the freshness of sleep, going out with matchless fortitude and nameless heroism written upon their brows, to do the work of that great city. And my vision is ever, always this: What if every soldier in this multitudinous army of toil fully realized that God is going to work with him, that within every slow-going hour and disheartening difficulty, within every subtle temptation and wholesome joy, standeth that blessed Messiah God who said: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Is it too much to say that God earns His living by the sweat of His brow, that the God by Whom universes are created and sustained, feels the crimson sweat-drops trickle down His cheeks while He agonizes to bring forth the redemption of a planet? Ah, brothers! the cornfields of commerce are all golden with the glory of God, and He wants to walk through them with every true disciple of honest toil! The

God of the cornfields is down watching things grow these Summer days, woven from Heaven's cloth of silver and of gold; so divinely near is He that we may take upon our lips the confession of that Yorkshire saint, John Nelson: "My soul seemed to breathe its life in God as naturally as my body breathed life in the common air." Yes, the God of the cornfields will go out with us at sunrise, companion us during the hours of toil, and walk homeward with us at sunset as we chant the mystic music of the soul:

In the cool of the evening, when the low sweet whispers waken,
When the laborers turn them homeward, and the weary have their will,
When the censers of the roses o'er the forest-aisles are shaken,
Is it but the wind that cometh o'er the far green hill?

For they say 'tis but the sunset winds that wander thro' the heather,
Rustle all the meadow-grass and bend the dewy fern;
They say 'tis but the winds that bow the reeds in prayer together,
And fill the shaken pools with fire along the shadowy burn.

In the beauty of the twilight, in the Garden that He loveth,
They have veiled His lovely vesture with the darkness of a name!
Thro' His Garden, thro' His Garden, it is but the wind that moveth,
No more! But O the miracle, the miracle is the same.

In the cool of the evening, when the sky is an old story,
Slowly dying, but remembered, ay, and loved with passion still . . .
Hush . . . the fringes of His garment, in the fading golden glory
Softly rustling as He cometh o'er the far green hill.

Moreover, the God of the cornfields is so near that He knows the hearts that laugh and the hearts that weep. Strange how we want to excuse God out of our lives, isn't it? We like to exile Him away off on the lonely side of some Martian canal, or encircle Him in a ring of Saturn, or hide Him in a moon of Jupiter, or banish Him to some isolated cranny of the universe. Somehow or other we don't like to think of God, our Heavenly Father, as being near us—so close that He is in every burst of rippling laughter, so close that He extracts the salt from every pain-tinged tear. We would push God out and away into the dim distances, but He will not be driven out of the world He hath made and upholds. "In Him we live and move and have our being." Well, what then? Why, then, we beg to be excused ourselves. We are like the four-year-old who was spending a night away from home. When bedtime came, she knelt at the knee of her hostess to say her prayers, expecting the usual prompting. But as the hostess could not help the child in her devotions, she closed after this fashion: "Please God, 'scuse me. I can't remember my prayers, and I'm staying with a lady who don't know any." And is it possible that there are human beings who have made fool's-caps for their little heads, turned life into a huge dunce-stool, taken their seat thereupon and never pray? Why, God is near and wants to be talked with. He wants you to bring your little foolish joys to Him that He may make them large and pure and true. The grandest words man ever heard about joy were spoken on the very verge of Gethsemane itself: "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled." And this means that the cup of life holds only poisoned dregs until the Son of God pours into it His golden drops of joy, the satisfying elixir of eternal life. Hug it to your hearts—God in Christ is near the people who laugh

that they may laugh better and truly; God in Christ is near the people who weep that He may show them how tears, under His touch, are transmuted into unfading rainbows of spiritual joy and peace! Ay, the Christ of God still goeth through the cornfields of human life. That is why souls have their holy, unbroken Sabbaths of calm!

II

Consider, in the second place, that Jesus going through the cornfields suggests not only the God that is near but the God that is far, also. The cornfields! And what are the cornfields but a parable of the worlds of the far-stretching universe, with the great Farmer God as the tender of them all? A two-legged question mark ran into my study in the form of a four-year-old boy. He had been working hard at play, the blood was plunging through his veins and drops of perspiration were trickling down his cheeks. He had a question to ask, and it was this: "Papa, where does the heat come from?" I said: "The heat comes from the sun." Then he asked: "But where does the sun come from?" I hesitated for a moment, for that was not so easy to answer. At last I answered: "Well, the sun comes from God." I was about to congratulate myself on getting out of a hard place, when the child struck me full in the face with the question: "But, Papa, where does God come from?" You see, I was cornered sure enough, and I began to think: "What am I to do? What shall I say?" At last I said: "My child, God comes from everywhere and goes to everywhere. He is everywhere this moment. He is in your wondering eyes, and He is in the last atom of the last world that glimmers in the skirts of space." I know the child did not understand my answer, any more than you do, but I do not think I would change that answer this morning. The nearness of God proclaims

the dearness of God, and the farness of God proclaims the omnipresence of God—and oh, He is our Father, our Creator, our Eternal Lover!

I have never been able to understand the mental attitude of people who allow the vastness of the physical universe to obscure their faith in the Christian God. It seems to me that it ought to compel the opposite result. It seems to me that any soul, acquainted with God through the revelation of Jesus, ought to rejoice over every new discovery of astronomy. When David wrote about the heavens he could not have seen more than six thousand stars; but when a friend sent me a picture of the great Lick observatory, yonder on Mount Hamilton, I felt hilariously glad to know that David's God and your God and my God, had revealed to the eye of that giant telescope a hundred million suns blazing in the robes of space. And yet, if Lord Kelvin were on earth today, he would accuse even the Lick telescope of having inferior sight, somewhat like a body whose soul-windows have grown dim; for Kelvin threw his mathematical tape around the circumference of the rushing worlds, and, after computing their total mass, said there must be a thousand million suns and planets wheeling through the measureless canopies.

Now, this intelligence ought not to make you feel small. Not one of those worlds, vast masses of brute matter, knows where it came from, where it is going to, or the God who rolls it along the burning tracks of the universe. But you can speak to God, you can love God, and God speaks to you, and God loves you. Down by the sea I saw children shoveling up the sand. Sometimes a child would fill his shovel and then gradually empty it out, a sparkling stream of sand-grains pouring down the invisible path of gravitation. And when I thought that there are worlds on worlds, rivers of worlds, Niagaras of worlds, oceans

of worlds, and worlds as much vaster than this planet as the earth is vaster than a sand-grain, I was not at all overwhelmed by the thought. The fact of the matter is, I was rather glad to think that when I have finished with this pin-point of a world, I'd have an infinitely better place to go to and continue learning forever in the companionship of the same unchanging God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

My friend, if God is out there in the cornfields of space, why should you or I be afraid? As there are no darkened rooms for the child when Mother is near, so there can be no darkened worlds for the spirit as long as God is in them. Is not the paternal, the maternal instinct one of the gladdest mysteries running through Nature and Man on up and up until it throws its clinging tendrils around the Heart of God? I was watching the sheep, and two little lambs got lost from their mother. They were black lambs and didn't know they were lost; but I did, and so did the mother. I stood and watched while the old mother sheep called and called and called. But the little black lambs didn't answer—you see, they didn't know they were lost! So I continued to watch, and directly the lambs heard the mother calling. And there must have been something in the mother-voice that told the lambs they were lost, for they began bleating and crying and running about as if mad, so frightened were they. Finally, the mother and the lambs saw each other, and truly it was a poem of nature to see the mother leaping toward the lambs and the lambs running toward her! It reminded me of the meeting of that old father and the prodigal son when the boy came back home from the far country. And do you know that meadow scene made me turn my eyes everywhither—earthward, skyward, spaceward. And I said: "O my Soul, if lambs hear and answer the voice of their mother, wilt not thou hear

and answer the voice of thy Father? O Soul, lambs are not afraid when mother is near. Why shouldst thou be afraid when thy Father is near, and God is everywhere? O Soul, lambs can never rise above this green sward, but thou canst walk the spatial meadows of the universe, and be at home." Let us be glad the God of the cornfields is near; glad the God of the cornfields is far—so near that He laughs through the heart of a baby, so far that He looks through the eye of a seraph and shines through the burning orbs of space!

III

Consider, finally, that the God of the near and the God of the far, that the God who is out in the cornfields of space, of history, and of life, is the companion and friend of man. In other words, the universe is a majestic cornfield in which to grow men, and God is its Infinite Farmer. I am aware that there was a time when this proposition would have been whistled down the wind. But that time, thank God, has vanished. The Pharisees of science, no longer bound by the iron threads of law, have become the disciples of Jesus. The Sadducees of materialism, no longer wrapped in their black robes of death, have put on the shining garments of resurrection glory. Even they have come to realize that "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath"; that the world was made for man, and not man for the world; that the universe was made for man, and not man for the universe. While God is in the infinitely great and in the infinitely small, He is transcendently and supremely in that being He has created in His own image, for God hath set Eternity in man's heart. Some time ago a Philadelphia anatomist announced to the world that the brain of Walt Whitman, through the carelessness of a hospital employee, had been lost to science. The jar that held the poet's brain fell to the

floor and was broken, so that not even the fragments of the organ were saved. Well, let the poet's brain be shattered, if you will, the poet himself cannot be touched. The flaming star-wheels cannot crush him; the maddened oceans cannot engulf him; the black caves of night cannot hide him; the scorching flames of hell cannot destroy him. Man is a spark of Divinity, the image of Deity, an "emotion of God flashed into time," and, therefore, the heir of glory, the brother of the King of Eternity, and the child of the living God!

And so I say man is out upon a journey—a long journey, a journey stained by bleeding feet, a journey crossed and recrossed by chilling winds, a journey scorched by blistering heat, a journey throbbing with awful heartaches. Yet the journey is not made alone. It begins with God, it continues with God, and it ends with God. And, therefore, while man is out upon a journey, it is a journey from glory to glory. Unfallen angels must watch him going through the cornfields of time plucking the ears of corn. O Moses, mighty man of God, your face is shot through and through with divine lightnings. You seem to be plucking something from the very heart of Jehovah. And Moses says: "I've plucked the ten golden ears of Heaven's law for the men of earth." There is Isaiah, son of Amos, intoxicated by staggering draughts of glory. The seraphim have shaken their wings above the prophet, and a diamond rain of heavenly splendor beats down upon him. What have you seen in those mystic heights, O Seer of God? And Isaiah says: "I've plucked a vision from the face of Deity. I've seen the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." And there is Paul, leaving his body and running up God's stairway until he reached the third heaven. O Paul, when you get back in your body again, and down among common folk, won't

you tell us what you saw in the upper heights? "I couldn't," says Paul. "I plucked unspeakable words from the lips of God, and it would not be lawful to utter them until we all get home to glory." And there is John, to whom God sent the New Jerusalem singing down the spaces just to console him in his Patmos exile. Did you bring anything back from Patmos, John? "Oh, yes," says John, "I plucked a few words from the chorus of the prostrate angels round about the throne. They worshiped God, saying, Amen! Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen."

And everywhere it is the same undying story. As we behold men going up and down the cornfields of history, they are plucking the ears of corn as they journey. What are you reaching after with those long mental fingers, O Shakespeare? "I've seen how the corn of human nature grows upon the stalk of life, and I'm plucking at the heart of this mystery." What are those great hands grasping after, O Beethoven? "I'm dreaming of unblended harmonies my deaf ears have never heard, and these hands are trying to pluck them from out the invisible realms of harmony." Why run those hands up into the sleeve of darkness, O Milton? They seem to be straining after something. "Worlds of light lie behind these dead eyes of mine. I've seen an angel and heard him sing, and these hands are fumbling about in the darkness hunting for words to tell about his song." What are those majestic hands reaching after, O Angelo? "I need a few bars of light, a few bursts of morning, a few scraps of sunset, to show men how God paints pictures. I'm plucking the golden ears of color from Nature's garden to hang up in a picture gallery."

And why are men plucking, plucking, plucking, as they go through the cornfields? Do you not recall

what Christ said to the Pharisees, when they charged Him with breaking the law? "And He said unto them, Did ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was ahungered, he and they that were with him?" Ah! this being called man is driven by the dynamic of an awful need, impelled by the aching of an unsatisfied hunger. A woman who gathered a bouquet of pansies said to me: "The more you pick the pansies the more they grow." And the heart of man is like a bed of pansies. Satisfy one need of his nature, appease one hunger of his being, and a thousand needs and hungers spring up in their stead. And so man dips his thirsty lips into all waters. He beats his bloody fists against all mysteries. He thrusts his face into the teeth of all storms. He betakes himself into the blackness of all midnights. For he feels the tugging of an insatiable need, the biting of a ravenous hunger; he experiences the pain of his own incompleteness, as he sits at the feast of life like "a crowned corpse at a feast of skeletons." He is looking for himself, he is looking for home, he is looking for God!

And then, one day, man's being is shaken by an ecstatic throb of life. Across his darkened roadway breaks the radiance of an Infinite Face. He goes to Bethlehem and sees how God gets folded up in a woman's arms. He goes to Jerusalem and hears God talk with human lips. He goes to Calvary and sees God die for human sin. He goes to Joseph's tomb and sees how "death stung himself to death when he stung Christ." He goes to Olivet and sees how God makes a curve in the atmosphere and retreats along untrodden highways to the City that hath foundations. He goes at last to his own upper room of the soul, to his heart's own dear Pentecost, and his tongue is taught to prattle in the accents of the Holy Ghost! Ah! as we think of God going through the cornfields,

our calmed spirits make glad response to the song of the poet:

So meekly did He love us men,
  Though blind we were with shameful sin,
He touched our eyes with tears, and then
  Led God's tall angels flaming in.

. . . . . .

So gentle were His ways with us,
  That crippled souls had ceased to sigh;
On them He laid His hands, and thus
  They gloried at His passing by.

Without reproof or word of blame,
  As mothers do in childhood's years,
He kissed our lips in spite of shame,
  And stayed the passage of our tears.

So tender was His love to us,
  (We had not learned to love before),
That we grew like to Him, and thus
  Men sought His grace in us once more.

III

THE LIGHT OF LIFE

The twilight that I desired hath been turned into trembling unto me.—Isa. XXI. 4.

But the path of the righteous is as the dawning light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.—Prov. IV. 18.

It shall come to pass, that at evening time there shall be light.—Zech. XIV. 7.

Again therefore Jesus spake unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life. —St. John VIII. 12.

THE other morning I witnessed an unforgettable sight. Rising somewhat earlier than usual, I saw, coming out of the home of a friend, the crescent moon and morning star in golden conjunction. Like twinkling lovers, they kept their beautiful way through the spaces. "Isn't it glorious!" my companion exclaimed. But a little later, when the sun had cleared the horizon, the young moon and the morning star were lost in the brilliance of the dawn.

Somewhat similar, it seems to me, is the conjunction of these passages composing our text. While the first, second, and third have their peculiar significance and charm, the fourth is like the sun in his strength: when he shines, the others fade. So our subject is, "The Light of Life." Like all great matters, its values are at once close at hand and far away. Step by step, therefore, I want us to see how each of these Scrip-

tural planets is finally swallowed up in the Light of Life. At best, one can scarcely more than preach up to the fourth text.

I

Consider that the first passage holds a picture of life's tragedy. "The twilight that I desired," says the Isaian text, "has been turned into trembling unto me." The words are in one of those admittedly strange oracles about the meaning of which scholars are not agreed. The writer seems to be overwhelmed because of the judgment-dooms which are pronounced upon his own nation, though Babylonia and Persia are instruments in their execution. But whatever may be the literal and outward meaning of the passage, its moral and inward meaning may not be mistaken.

As there are two twilights in the coming and going of the day, there are two twilights in the moral realm also. There is the twilight preceding the dawn—such as I recently witnessed. It is one of the brooding, rapturous moments in which Nature is about to open her mystic eyes upon a fresh new world. Then there is the twilight that precedes the down-drooping darkness. It should be, from a human standpoint, one of the richest hours of the entire day—an hour of household sanctities, big with memory and anticipation; an hour, also, in which the harsh voices and confusing noises of the day are melodiously rounded into spiritual calm.

But the twilight of my text is not of this character; it is the deliberately chosen twilight of sin, which inevitably deepens into the darkness of spiritual tragedy. Is there not, for example, what may be called the twilight of a nation? Sometimes a nation chooses the way which leads to darkness. Moral issues are blurred; wickedness stalks forth like a wild beast coming out of its lair, fierce and bold because of the enshadowing

night. A nation disregards conscience; it defies law; it boasts of its wealth; it is proud of its "place in the sun"; it brags of its physical might. Refusing to hearken unto the irrepealable admonitions and imponderables by which both society and individuals live, such a nation desires the twilight of wrong, injustice, and materialism. Then follows, it may be, one of those violent explosions which made Bishop Butler consider whether whole communities, like individuals, do not become suddenly insane. Well, at any rate, ours is a moral universe. The day of reckoning is as sure as gravity. It can neither be bribed nor escaped. The twilight of brazen wickedness gives place to the midnight of distress and horror. "The twilight that I desired has been turned into trembling unto me"—is not this the grim confession which is ultimately wrung from the lips of the nation or community that deliberately makes evil its good?

Therefore, on this day when the churches of the land are celebrating the third anniversary of the birth of national prohibition, most timely indeed is the warning, issued by the Judicial section of the American Bar Association, to the people of America: "Reverence for law and enforcement of law depend mainly upon the ideals and customs of those who occupy the vantage ground of life in business and society. The people of the United States, by solemn constitutional and statutory enactment, have undertaken to suppress the age-long evil of the liquor traffic. When, for the gratification of their appetites, or the promotion of their interests, lawyers, bankers, great merchants and manufacturers, and social leaders, both men and women, disobey and scoff at this law, or any other law, they are aiding the cause of anarchy and promoting mob violence, robbery, and homicide: they are sowing dragons' teeth, and they need not be surprised when they find that no judicial or police au-

thority can save our country or humanity from reaping the harvest."

Furthermore, there is this terrible twilight for the individual also. The great literature of the ages exposes it from many angles. But no mind has ever invested it with such terror as Shakespeare. Dreadful indeed is the prayer of Lady Macbeth to spirits, tending on mortal thoughts, to unsex her; to fill her from crown to toe top-full of direst cruelty; to make thick her blood; to stop up the access and passage to remorse, that no compunctious visitings of Nature shake her fell purpose; to come to her woman's breasts and take her milk for gall; to the thick night to come, "and pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell," that her keen knife see not the wound it makes, nor Heaven peep through the blanket of the dark, to cry "Hold, hold!" But after the ghastly murder of Duncan, what a change comes over this fierce, tiger-hearted woman! She walks the porches of the soul's unsleeping midnight; she carries a taper in her hand, refusing to be alone for a single moment in the unlit dark. Walking and rubbing her hands, she cries: "Out, damned spot! out, I say. Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand." No wonder the doctor, seeing her awful plight, confesses: "More needs she the divine than the physician. God, God forgive us all!" Thus, after the hoarse-croaking raven of sinful ambition has nested in the very citadel of her being, lo! the twilight that she desired is turned into trembling that makes the ear of midnight horrible beyond words. Oh, no! Nothing could restrain the throne-hunters from regicide; but once the crime is committed, the universe suddenly yawns with black gulfs, the very air is crimson with gouts of blood, nor can all the perfumes of Arabia sweeten those self-stained hands! Frankly, are not all our medieval hells as burning matches to these

"thick-coming fancies" which rise in stifling mental fumes from the soundless pits of the soul itself?

Now, these profound insights into moral evil seem to confirm this conclusion: Wickedness is ultimately self-destructive. The problem is too great, let us confess, to admit of snap-judgments. Yet taken in the large, and stretching out over wide tracts of history, sin lacks cohesive power; unrighteousness is essentially disintegrating; iniquity, notwithstanding its persistence and variousness, finally destroys itself. Subtle at first and almost imperceptible, wrong surreptitiously unfolds its stealthy, hydra-headed coils; growing furious and ever more furious, it threatens to crush every fair and beautiful token of right. And then—to change an already mixed figure—the kingdom of evil begins to shake and fall apart. Weak even in its strength, sin, whether national or individual, is at last made to confess: "The twilight that I desired hath been turned into trembling unto me."

II

More pleasant for consideration is our second passage: "The path of the righteous is as the dawning light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Here is the twilight of the morning, even as my dear friend and I beheld it yesterday. That moon and star swam through oceans of gray, then of pearl, then of silver. But when the sun flamed his great banners, there was no need of the lesser lights—at least for this world.

It is ever so of the path of the righteous. At first he has to feel his way along his moral orbit; sometimes he hesitates as he breathes the air of uncertainty; he cannot see as clearly as he would. He, too, is in the twilight, but it is the twilight of dawn! On and on he goes, led by a kindly light, until God's luminous inner morning breaks forth to guide him on

to the glowing noon. This, then, is our second picture: The journey toward life's vigorous meridian. And are there not at least two color-tones in the picture? Let us see.

There is, first, the color of youth. Morning and youth somehow suggest each other. They are both rosy, young, and happy. The birds of the trees and the birds of hope sing in their gardens. Oh, my young friends, assembled here from college halls and shop walls, I beseech you to remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth. For a blasted youth is too often a blighted maturity. Do you not remember that story of Hawthorne? A youthful knight loved a beautiful maiden of the woodlands. She taught him the secret of fellowship with the forest creatures. The squirrels understood and responded to his call; the birds knew his voice and came in answer to him. Then, one day, he went away to the city and sinned a grievous sin. Returning to the forest, his little woodland friends seemed to regard him with fear and misgiving. He called them, as of old, but they shrank from him and scampered away. Looking for the lovely maiden, he sought the fountain where she lived, and lo! she, too, shrank from him. With a stain of blood upon her beautiful face, she disappeared within the depths of the fountain. Is it not a poetic way of teaching that sensualism kills and blights like a moral mildew? Sin leaves a withering, scorching blister upon the lips of the soul. Wrongdoing is abnormal, and ten thousand voices sound their warning against it! Oh, keep the morning of your life pure and unspotted! Be soldiers of the ideal, queens of the virtue-crowned! One lost battle for the right, if such a thing were possible, is worth a hundred victories for the wrong.

But even finer, it seems to me, is the righteous vigor of soul that makes for manful maturity. Glorious, indeed, are the men and women into whose hearts the

fresh light of morning shines more and more unto the meridian—the perfect day of high thinking and clean living. Ah! those easy-going thirties, and fading, cynical forties—are they not the years that try our souls? Verily, the man who lives next door to hell is the man who has spilled the sparkling wine of youth upon the dying embers of maturity, old and gray in sin, disillusionment, and despair. On the contrary, consider the life facing noon in the spirit of the highest. There is Quintin Hogg, founder of the London polytechnic. The son of wealth and position, educated at Eton, young Hogg might have squandered his youth in idleness. But realizing the need of boys less fortunate than himself, he set about to help them. Then he discovered that he did not know how. They were children of poverty, he a child of the palace. They lived in different worlds and spoke a different language. Soon, however, young Hogg learned the secret of approach. He dressed like them, played with them, learned their tongue, lived with them, becoming acquainted with chimney sweeps and bootblacks. Finally, he could say: "I know these ragged boys in London—where they live, how they talk, what they need." Little by little, the Polytechnic came into being. Thousands of high-minded, efficient young men have gone out from that great institution to help the world along. So does one human being, walking in the growing light, kindle a multitude who likewise journey on to the perfect day.

In far different fields do we find a kindred spirit manifested in the adventures of Shackleton and Scott. As we follow Shackleton and his companions across the frozen wastes of South Georgia, does not the figure of light seem almost impertinent? The power of the night and the press of the storm—to borrow the words of that Browning whom Shackleton loved—these, with

all their black battalions of despair and death, seemed to hold the entire field at their mercy. And yet, here is Shackleton's own confession: "When I look back at those days I have no doubt that Providence guided us, not only across those snow-fields, but across the storm-white sea that separated Elephant Island from our landing-place on South Georgia. I know that during that long and racking march of thirty-six hours over the unnamed mountains and glaciers of South Georgia it seemed to me often that we were four, not three. I said nothing to my companions on the point, but afterwards Worsley said to me, 'Boss, I had a curious feeling on the march that there was another person with us.' Crean confessed to the same idea. One feels 'the dearth of human words, the roughness of mortal speech' in trying to describe things intangible, but a record of our journeys would be incomplete without a reference to a subject very near to our hearts."

As for Scott, those who discovered the remains of that expedition set up a cross in that lonely land. And why, and for whom? Well, Oakes, as you remember, fearing that his frozen feet might handicap and imperil the lives of his fellows, walked deliberately out into the night and the storm. Of course he never came back because he never intended to come back. Setting up a cross in the vicinity where Oakes perished, the rescuers wrote thereon: "Somewhere hereabouts lies the body of a very gallant gentleman." Oh, my fellow-pilgrims toward the meridian, do not these and a million voices call us to the heights? For, as Dr. Glover has finely said: "The Gospels are not four, but ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, and the last word of every one of them is this: 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'"

III

But there is a third milestone on our way to the goal: "It shall come to pass, that at evening time there shall be light." The words are a climax to one of God's great judgment days. Zechariah says that Jerusalem, because of her sin, shall be taken, her houses rifled, her women ravished, half of her citizens shall go into captivity, while the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Moreover, the powers of Nature are involved in this great day of the Lord. Stars and suns shall be darkened, deep gloom shall be over the face of the earth. Yet, little by little, this unique time—"not day, nor night"—shall wear on toward an evening all golden with the brightness of an everlasting dawn.

Well, is not this a picture of true living? If morning symbolizes youth and noon maturity, then evening time is prophetic of luminous age. It is just a prophet-poet's way of saying that life grows on and ever on to finer issues and richer meanings. Unquestionably, the universe keeps faith with those whose faith is set in God; otherwise, it is not a universe at all. Moreover, if there are not clear and noble realities disclosed in life's late afternoon which were impossible in life's morning and maturity, there would seem to be a mistake in the plan which unfolds a human career in this world. Are the dreams of youth and the vigor of maturity weightier, more precious than the ripe experience and wisdom of the evening hour? Surely, this ought not to be! Is the body greater than the soul? We are not in the habit of making such an admission—at least people who have grown taller than the muck-rakers! And yet, as blood and brawn become less assertive, if the rights of the soul grow correspondingly thin and tenuous, do we not practically admit that matter is superior to mind?

But no! To mortals hid with Christ in God, the

loveliness of the luminous evening draws quietly, splendidly on. God and Nature are not at strife, but both unite in saying to human beings, living in the strength and by the grace of Christ: "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of grain cometh in its season."

Standing in the presence of his dead companion, who had fought a long and brave battle with suffering, a friend said: "She did not find growing old gracefully the poetic thing it is often pictured." "And yet," came the swift answer, *"she did it!"* Despite the pain and burden of it all, so fair and fine were the patience and altruism of her triumphant spirit, that she recalled for me Scott's hero in "Waverley." "The sun's broad disc was on a level with the ocean," says the Wizard of the North, "and the clouds through which he had traveled the livelong day were assembled about him like misfortunes and disasters around a sinking empire and falling monarch." Ah, is there not a moral magnificence, a spiritual grandeur in these traveling kings and queens of God, who brave their physical disasters with the fortitude of good soldiers and the hope of undying immortals? But my friend was so deeply merged in the process of living as to be unaware of the heroism and splendor with which she invested it all. We must stand away from a great mountain to measure its majesty. Not otherwise do we require perspective to appreciate a life of high daring and achieving moral courage.

Others, however, hear no vesper music because they are spiritually untuned. I was told of a canary that stopped singing altogether. Once a golden warbler, it had fallen on songless days. Then the woman took the feathered minstrel to a bird doctor. "No wonder the little creature does not sing," he exclaimed, after examining it. "Just look at its feet, full of corns and twitching with pain!" After treating the bird, he said:

"I think now that its song will come back in a few weeks." Taking the bird back home, my friend was thrilled the very next day with songs from her mellow-throated singer! Have some of us lost the spiritual songs we used to sing? Perchance we quenched the Spirit of Love away back in life's morning-time. Or, it may be, we came tunefully through the morning only to enter a long, dreary, monotonous noontide. Well, whoever you are and whatever the cause of your jangling discords, the grace of God in Christ Jesus can make you an instrument of praise and triumph in the orchestra of life. You, too, may sing with the spirit and the understanding the classic songs of Zion. And one of the major strains shall be: "It shall come to pass, that at evening time there shall be light." Like Charles Kingsley, in his "Night Bird," you may "wake the dawning" of that day which knows neither darkness nor death.

A floating, a floating across the sleeping sea,
All night I heard a singing bird upon the topmost tree.

"Oh, came you off the isles of Greece, or off the banks of Seine;
Or off some tree in forest free which fringe the western main?"

"I came not off the old world nor yet from off the new—
But I am one of the birds of God which sing the whole night through."

"Oh, sing, and wake the dawning—oh, whistle for the wind;
The night is long, the current strong, my boat it lags behind."

"The current sweeps the old world, the current sweeps the new;
The wind will blow, the dawn will glow ere thou hast sailed them through."

IV

Now we have come to the final passage, and the greatest of all: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life." Our Lord spoke these words at the Feast of Tabernacles. On the evening of the first day of the Feast, four golden candelabra, each having four golden bowls, were lighted in the Court of the Women, and these sent their brightness over the entire city. There is some question as to whether these great lights were relit on successive evenings. All authorities seem to agree, however, that there was no illumination on the last evening of the Feast. Perhaps it was on this last evening, when the festal lights failed to send forth their brilliance, that the Master declared: "I am the light of the world!"

Thus have we come, full circle, from morning to noon, from noon to evening, from evening to—what? Why, to the verge of a Day that has neither morning, noon, nor evening. We are come to life, eternal life, in the flesh or out of it, in youth or maturity, in age or agelessness. "And this is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him Whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." Here is something, then, that is not conditioned by matter, time, or space: it is conditioned alone by a certain quality or kind of knowledge. When this condition is fulfilled, leave theology to theologians, philosophy to philosophers, science to scientists, and lesser matters to whomsoever you choose. For you have the big, deathless, present-tense reality of that eternal life which is not even on speaking terms with death, save as it commands death to do its bidding.

"The Light of Life!" Here we are beyond the twilight of dawn or darkness, beyond the morning that deepens into noon, beyond the noon that goldens into

evening. We have come to the light of life, or, rather the Light of Life has come to us! What a truth, and what unquenchable splendors flame within it! Lesser lights twinkle along the way, like that young moon and morning star my friend and I saw; but when the Sun riseth in all His strength, beauty, warmth, and brilliance, how quickly do all the other luminaries fade and fail! I think of the light of philosophy, the light of science, the light of art, the light of civilization, the light of social intercourse, the light of discovery—ah, yes, they are all greatly worth while and all are greatly inadequate, too! It is the light of life we long for, and it is the light of life we have.

Do you not recall Thackeray's description of the death of Colonel Newcombe? Its simple pathos and majesty give it the distinction of great literature. "At the usual evening hour," it runs, "the chapel bell began to toll, and Thomas Newcombe's hands outside the bed feebly beat time—and just as the last bell struck, a peculiar sweet smile shone over his face, and he lifted up his head a little, and quickly said, *'Adsum'*—and fell back. It was the word we used at school when names were called; and, lo! he whose heart was that of a little child had answered to his name, and stood in the presence of the Master!"

"Oh," but you reply, "that is fiction. Give us something from life." Very well! Life is far deeper and more moving than fiction. Come with me to that room in Boston from which Phillips Brooks, as the dawn walks over the New England hills, is going forth into the full radiance of the heavenly morning. While physicians are in consultation in an adjoining room, William Gray Brooks is alone with his great preacher-brother. "Phillips knew me," he says. "He looked up from his pillow with the sweetest smile, and held out his hand. He pressed mine warmly and strongly, smiled again and again, and once or twice

said, 'Good-night.' Then he lay back on the pillow, put his great left hand on his heart, and smiled and nodded his head with his eyes full on mine. Then he raised his right hand with the forefinger extended, and waved it round and round for several moments, as he used to do when hearing music, or humming some tune to himself. It was clear and bright and happy. Full of the joy that was in his heart—in harmony with the love that filled it, and with the heavenly melodies that he heard calling him to his eternal home, full of rest and life."

And did not my friend, with whom I saw the morning break on yesterday, tell me once again of that creative hour when he heard the bells of immortality ringing across the mystic seas of God? "You must never doubt, never fear, when you come to the great change," said his own passing friend, whom he had nursed and cared for like the Big Brother he is. With unclouded faculties, his friend continued: "I may die today, tomorrow, in a week, or in a month. I know that I am dying; I also know that there is no death. Why, I see it all perfectly. It is too beautiful for words." And so he, too, went on, even while blushing birds came down from the Hills of Paradise to the very edge of the River Beautiful, singing—singing—singing him along the harmonious ways that converge eternally in the Light of Life!

The ship may sink
And I may drink
A hasty death in the bitter sea;
But all that I leave
In the ocean-grave
Can be slipped and spared, and no loss to me.

What care I,
Though falls the sky,
And the shriveling earth to a cinder turn?

No fires of doom
Can ever consume
What never was made nor meant to burn.

Let go the breath!
There is no death
To the living soul, nor loss, nor harm.
Not of the clod
Is the life of God;
Let it mount, as it will, from form to form.

IV

THE VENTURE OF FAITH

And he went out, not knowing whither he went.—Hebrews xi. 8.

Perhaps the uniquest art collection in the world is in the Uffizi gallery in Florence. Originated by the Medici, the sworn foes of the Pitti family, from whom the other great Florentine gallery borrows its name, the collection has been added to from time to time, until now it holds the complete story of the beginning and development of art. The most remarkable room in this gallery is called the Tribune, built in octagonal form, and containing five of the masterpieces of the world's sculpture. I shall never forget the eagerness with which I sought this famous room, much less the rapture I experienced in beholding its marvels of sculptured beauty. However, there is one piece, the "Dancing Faun," which holds the eye of the visitor more intently than any other, having been pronounced "the most exquisite piece of art of all that remains of the ancient."

Now, the eleventh chapter of Hebrews is a kind of Tribune room in the gallery of religion. It also contains the names of five masters in the realm of faith. These are Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Moses. The angel of the imagination invests them with a finer dignity than is possible for the sculptor's chisel to do in stone. They are the deathless heroes of the deeds and triumphs of faith. We linger lovingly before the

picture of each as he looks down from walls aflame with glory. But there will be no trace of jealousy, I am sure, if we tarry a little longer before the portrait of Abraham, the friend of God and the father of the faithful. Nor shall we do violence to our admiration for the others, if, as we steal close up to his picture, we read these words: "And he went out, not knowing whither he went."

Indeed, there is a solemn impressiveness in watching this great man, in the early history of the race, going forth, as Browning would say, to "prove his soul." There is something original and sublime in the undertaking. The words are more remarkable, I think, for what they do not say than for what they do say. They suggest a whole universe of meaning, which is big with mystery. It is a common thing for men to go out in quest of gold, of spoil, of fame, of glory; but here is a man going out in quest of God, and at the same time ignorant of where he is going. A strange captain is he who puts out to sea without compass or log book. A strange engineer is he who pulls the throttle before the fire has made the steam. A strange marksman is he who snaps the trigger before his sight is focused upon the bead. Strange, also, had Abraham gone forth from Ur of the Chaldees unfurnished and unequipped. So the Father of the Faithful had faith for a compass, God for a companion, and Heaven for a goal. Through these he bade farewell to home, farewell to friends, farewell to idolatry. "And he went out, not knowing whither he went." It is the venture of faith.

I

Consider the power which thrust Abraham out upon his great adventure. We are told that it was by faith that he responded to God's call. Not only for Abra-

ham, but for us also, faith is that mysterious Columbus of the soul, daring to brave the darkness of unknown seas. Faith is too large for the telescope, too small for the microscope, and too elusive for the scalpel. Yet it is more real than the solid earth we tread. Now, the popular conception of faith is that it is a kind of mental hobgoblin, the visionary creature of a disordered imagination, the ghostly spook of a soul that feeds on mist and moonshine. But this is not the idea of faith set forth in the Word of God, nor is it by any means the conception of faith practiced by men every day. In the last analysis, faith lies at the root of all things. The worldling cries: "Down with your fancy, and up with your facts." The materialist cries: "Away with your theory. I want substance." Now, faith is so real and so universal a force that it condescends to come down into the slough of the worldling and the filth of the materialist with this answer: "I am substance—yea, more, I am the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." O what wonder words are these! Go tell your worldling and your materialist that faith is not a chimera of brains devoid of gray matter! Tell them that it is substance, tell them that it is evidence!

Look at these words a little more closely. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for." Literally, substance is to stand under, as a foundation stands under a house. Now, so far as we know, the only being in the world capable of hope is man. Hope, in the best sense, is "to cherish a desire of good, or of something welcome, with expectation of obtaining it or belief that it is obtainable." In other words, faith is the foundation of man's desire of obtaining that which is good. Tell me, is there anything visionary or inconsequential in such substance? Faith is that substance. But if possible, faith is more—it is evidence. You are watching men work on a great building. Your friend

says: "In a few minutes they are going to lift that immense stone, dropping it into its place an hundred feet high." You look at the stone, the derrick, the frail engine, and say: "Oh, no, my friend, that is impossible." Directly the fastenings are attached to the stone, the engineer turns on the steam, and the derrick begins to hoist the mighty rock high in air, swinging the stone into its place. That is evidence of power hiding in a drop of water. The astronomer sweeps the sky with his telescope. He sees worlds infinitely larger than the one he lives in hanging on nothing. For thousands of years they have marched through space with the order of soldiers marching to battle. There is the mighty Jupiter shining in the outmost skirts of the universe. But with all his searchings, no Kepler has yet discovered the power lying back of and upholding this starry monarch. Jupiter, like faith, is the evidence of things not seen. Jupiter is the planet-preacher of the great God, Who is the planet-builder and sustainer. Will you kindly remember that faith is substance, not a ghost; faith is evidence, not a theory. With such a power for a compass, we cease to wonder that Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went.

Dr. Hillis has told us of the scientist and distinguished physician driving together in England. "Do you believe in prayer?" asked the physician. "Do you believe it right down to the ground? God governs the world according to natural laws. How can He interrupt these laws to answer prayer? What is man, anyway? Only one of fifteen hundred million tiny insects." The scientist told the physician that he would have to read the new books on science, that the old ones governing his thought had long since gone into oblivion. "Five years ago," said the scientist, "you did not believe in the X-ray. If anyone had told you that there was a light that would make the body

transparent, so that you could see the bones in your hand, and the needle broken off within, you would have scoffed at the suggestion. But the X-ray has been there all these years of your unbelief. Five years ago you did not believe in radium. You would have thought it unscientific to believe that the flame should not consume; that a substance does not burn itself up by its own shining. Now, however, you believe in radium—the very thing that once you would have denied as irrational. Ten years ago, as a physician you would have ridiculed the idea of influencing the human will by hypnotic suggestion. You would have said that it violates the sanctity of personality. Now, you recognize the principle, you constantly practice it as a surgeon in working with your patients. You cannot explain by what intermedium of nervous or mental or physical threads you influence men, but it is a fact, and as a fact the scientist must reckon with. Believing in these three things, during the last few years, you must remember that the X-ray, radium, and mental suggestion have a therapeutic force, antedated your birth, and existed from the very beginning. And who are you, that you shall believe the less and not believe the greater? Who are you, that you deny that God, also, by suggestion of truth, of beauty, of goodness, cannot control and govern men, and so answer prayer?" So the two men parted. The next day, in London, the scientist received a telegram reading: "Last night I said my prayers for the first time in thirty years." God be praised for the physicians who pray, and for those who are recovering the lost faith of childhood days! They are as good to look upon as Victor Hugo's white swan sailing down the city sewer undefiled!

Here are two chicks within the shell, unbroken as yet. Let us name one Agnostic and the other Christian Philosopher. Chick Agnostic says: "They tell me that

outside of this shell enclosing me is a world of light and warmth in which I may grow. They tell me, also, that I shall find the most delightful places to scratch in, and the most delicious worms upon which to feed. But I don't believe it. I think it is sheer nonsense. My friend here, who calls himself Christian Philosopher, says he knows that thousands of chicks like me have broken their shell, leaped out into this so-called beautiful world, and developed into big roosters. But I don't believe it. My name is Agnostic, and I propose to stay where I am."

Put your ear down to the shell containing our Christian Philosopher chick, and this is what he says: "I know there must be a great, beautiful world beyond the confines of this eggshell, because I long for such a world. What have I got these tiny, ungrown wings for? Surely not to fly around in this shell, for there isn't any room. What are these eyes for? Surely not to look around in this shell, for there's nothing to see. What are these feathers for? They must be to protect my body from the cold, but there isn't any cold here. So I think there must be a glorious world out there. At any rate, I am going to see." And so he begins pecking away, soon drills a hole through his shell, and lo! he steps out into this big, new world for which he was created. This is not only the story of chickens, but it is also the story of men. Every one of us is a chick Agnostic, or a Christian Philosopher chick. We either stay within our little earth-shell and remain an unfulfilled prophecy, or else we drill our way through the walls of unbelief, launching out into God's great universe of freedom and joy. Like Abraham, we go out not knowing whither we go, but of this much we are assured: We came from God, and we are going back to God!

II

Consider, also, that Abraham, as an exponent of the venture of faith, had God for a companion. You know government vessels sometimes put to sea with sealed orders. The captain is ignorant of whither he is going, until away out in midocean, perhaps, he breaks the seal and learns his destination. Abraham went forth under sealed orders. First comes a call to go, and then a call to go further, until one day, resting in the oak grove of Moreh, the sealed orders are broken, and this ancient Pilgrim Father discovers that God is his companion. "And the Lord appeared unto Abram." A journey that began in darkness is melting into light!

And this reminds us that Abraham was a heaven-born aristocrat. A thousand times has your mother said to you: "My boy, you are known by the company you keep." Abraham has been known through all subsequent centuries because he kept company with God. What a beautiful reverence we give to noble human friendships. We think of David and Jonathan, of Paul and Timothy, of Socrates and his students, of Emerson and Longfellow, of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett, and we say our world holds few finer memories than these. Human friendship is high and beautiful. Like angels of the spirit world, our absent friends slip through the golden gate of memory, clad in garments whiter than the whitest snow. The wand of thought waves above their vanished forms, and instantly they people space with their pleading eyes and transfigured faces. Again we romp and laugh in childhood days, and the angel of joy dances new tunes upon the strings of our soul-harps. No man who treasures the memory of a lovely human friendship should ever again feel poor in this world. But oh, blessed is the man who has climbed the ladder of human friendship, rung over rung, until his hand is

clasped in the friendship that is Divine. Like St. Peter's, he will be a building for all time and for all seasons. The great cathedral on the Tiber possesses many wonders, but not one surpasses this: In Winter, St. Peter's takes in enough cold to keep it cool in Summer; and in Summer, it takes in enough heat to keep it warm in Winter. And the man who has entered into the Divine companionship takes in enough joy to make his sorrow divine, while he takes in enough sorrow to make his gladness human and beautiful!

Remember, too, that Abraham entered upon an unbroken companionship. With faith for a compass, he at last discovered a Being who never failed him. We live in a world remarkable for its changes. Fire, flood, disease, and death not only prey upon man's life, but upon his property as well. Note the result of one of our great storms. The New York manager of the Postal Telegraph was informed that the entire service was crippled in the west, south, and northeastern routes. He tried to find out the extent of the damage, but all in vain. Finding it impossible to reach Chicago from New York, he did a most remarkable thing, impressing me as few things have with the wonderful era in which we live. This manager determined to reach Chicago by cabling around the world, and he did it. He sent a message twenty-five thousand miles east, asking what were the telegraphic conditions in Chicago. That message went by way of London, Gibraltar, Alexandria, Aden, Bombay, Madras, Hongkong, Guam, Manilla, San Francisco, and Chicago. It passed under three oceans and traversed four continents. But in an hour the manager in New York was informed that Chicago was in communication as far east as Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. You say that was a truly wonderful feat, and so say we all. I searched all the history, literature, and science that I know

anything about to find its parallel, and failed. I was about to give it up, when suddenly the words of an old Book flashed into my mind like a gleam of Heaven's lightning. Strangely enough, it is the very Book, too, which men sometimes complain of as having served its day, being unequal to the emergencies of this wonderful age of ours. But it was to this Book that I had to come in order to find a wonder that would equal that history-making telegram. Here it is—God's message from God's Book: "Before they call, I will answer. A nation shall be born in a day. It is not in Heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us? But the Word is very high unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." That is a more wonderful telegram, by far, than was flashed around the world; and it was penned by the finger of Divinity thousands of years ago. In a world written over by change, Abraham found the Unchanging Companion. So may you; so may I; so may every mortal.

III

Consider, finally, that with faith for a compass, and God for a companion, Abraham had Heaven for a goal. Now, if you have been spilling any tears of sympathy over this ancient Pilgrim Father starting upon his immortal quest, why you had better get out your handkerchief and dry those tears at once. "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

Looking for a city is indeed an interesting experience. I remember my first trip to New York many years ago. With what eagerness I looked for that great city! But it was so big I couldn't find it. I remember

the day I entered Boston, and how, after reaching Cambridge, the conductor called out: "Herverd Squeer!" instead of Harvard Square. I remember the night we entered London, and what a dull, sleepy old town it seemed to be, compared with New York. I remember the afternoon we rolled into Paris. Looking out upon the French capital with its miles of white marble palaces and pleasure-loving people, I thought of a field of flowers, with thousands of butterflies flitting from flower to flower. I remember the midnight we thundered into Rome, and how the romance of entering the Eternal City was so shockingly dispelled. I thrust my head out of the car window, hoping to catch the faint accents of Cicero's deathless voice, when, lo! the dream of years was rudely punctured by the lusty bawling of a yearling calf. I remember the afternoon we reached Naples—dipping her feet, like a coy maiden, into the blue waters of her storied Bay. I remember the beautiful summer day that Venice, like a Venus rising from the foam, burst upon my enraptured vision, and how that vision rapidly vanished under the stroke of those lazy gondoliers. I remember how, after passing villa upon villa, and hills green with history and with verdure, we sped into Florence, that "city of fair flowers, and flower of fair cities." I remember, too, how my heart swelled with joy as I caught, on approaching Milan, my first hungry glimpse of her glorious cathedral. For—

> 'Tis only in the land of fairy dreams
> Such marble temples rise, bright in the gleams
> Of golden sunshine. Truth here now repeats
> What fancy oft has pictured forth in sleep,
> And gives substantial form to airy flights.
> How bright! how beautiful! The turrets peep
> In snowy clouds, while statues crown their heights.
> Oft does the night these towers in moonshine steep,
> Stirring the soul to poetry's delights.

But what are all these cities compared with the one Abraham sought? Not one of them has foundations that will last. Not one of them has streets of gold. Not one of them has walls of jasper. Not one of them has eternal harpers harping with their harps. Not one of them has tearless eyes. Not one of them has acheless hearts. Not one of them has unshut doors and unshut gates. Not one of them has sunless days and moonless nights. But the city Abraham sought has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. Abraham looked for and found a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

I know not where
The glories of the heavenly city are,—
In dazzling sun, in moon, in quivering star,—
Yet faith can pierce the clouds and find Thee there.

I know not how
To each one of Thy children Thou canst come,
And make within so many hearts Thy home;
Yea, Lord, I feel Thee dwelling with me now.

I know not when
Thy voice shall reach a soul—hereafter, now—
Yet unto Thee shall every kingdom bow,
Whose voice shall quicken all the sons of men.

The wonder strange
Who shall explain, how dreary waste of snow
Into a garden of fair hopes can grow,
Save Thou, O Lord, Who work'st the wondrous change?

What need to know?
When all my questioning is laid to rest—
A seeker spent, upon a tender breast—
Soothed by sweet voice like murmuring waters flow.

V

AN UNFORGETABLE QUEEN

On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded . . . the seven chamberlains . . . to bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to show the peoples and the princes her beauty; for she was fair to look on. But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by the chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him.— Esther i, 10, 11, 12.

The Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther is the Xerxes of profane history. By common consent of historians, he was one of the most powerful monarchs that ever lived. The pages of Herodotus are filled with his exploits. Grote and Rollin, also, dwell upon his power and achievements. But his tawdry greatness seems worth while now only as it serves to set forth the heroism of his unforgotten and noble queen, Vashti. The centuries have tarnished the brilliance of his court, but not the beauty of his queen. Shushan the palace exists only in name; the hundred and fourscore days during which he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honor of his excellent majesty, are less than a shadow on the dial; the white, green, and blue hangings, tied with cords of purple and fine linen to silver rings in pillars of marble, perished long, long ago; the gold and silver beds, which sat upon a pavement of red and blue and white and black marble, have had no occupants for more than twenty-four

hundred years; the golden vessels, from which princes quaffed the royal wine, are all one with the golden sand-grains of the desert. For time is no respecter of persons. If it buries the common things in oblivion, "that shadow of darkness," time does not forget to pluck the spangles from the robes of kings, tossing them into the night also. But time cannot dull the beauty of a great soul. Time cannot quench the flame of a white life. Time cannot stain the snow of a pure heart. That is why Queen Vashti, and the tragedy of her life, forever hold our admiration and our tears.

Perhaps we shall be more capable of measuring the unfortunate queen by glancing at the monarch she opposed. Possessing the almost unlimited power of an oriental despot, the will of Ahasuerus was supposed to be, and in fact was, supreme in everything. The first chapter of Esther portrays him giving a royal feast to his lords and princes. In another part of the palace the queen is entertaining the women, because it was not customary for men and women to appear together in public. Ahasuerus has conceived the idea of making war on Greece, and this sumptuous feast to his subjects is a step looking to that end. Whatever he undertook, usually came to pass. He could dig a canal through the isthmus of Mount Athos. He could build a bridge of ships across the Hellespont. He could raise an army of more than two and a quarter million of men. He could shed tears when he reflected that, in less than a century, not one of these men would be alive. After his indecisive naval battle with Themistocles, at Artemissium, during which the Persian ships were seriously damaged by storm, Xerxes could still muster a fleet of twelve hundred vessels. All these things could he do, and many more. But there was *one* thing this monarch could not do: He could not compel a helpless woman to permit him, and his

drunken courtiers, to make a toy of her beauty. He could not drag a high-souled queen down from the pedestal of her stainless purity. In his drunken debauch the command went forth: "Bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to show the people and the princes her beauty: for she was fair to look on. But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by his chamberlains."

I

Now, the life-story of Vashti recalls the fact that palaces have furnished the actors in some of the darkest, deepest tragedies in history. When Shakespeare wanted material from which to create his immortal dramas, with unerring vision the mighty master began to probe the life-history of kings and queens. From their laughter and tears, their splendor and shame, their rise and fall, this intellectual king wove a literary tapestry which is the growing wonder of men. Indeed, as we watch Shakespeare move his royal players about his mental chess-board, we have to exclaim with Æschylus: "What a shadow of a shade is human royalty!" Rising in brilliance, royal careers usually set in darkness. And sometimes their darkness is made more terrible by the ominous flashings of red lightnings of remorse. After a palace and its occupants have passed under Shakespeare's pen, this is the conclusion of the whole matter: Thrones are painted bubbles, and kings and queens are bubble-chasers! This is not to say there are no good kings and queens, because there are. It is simply emphasizing the fact that the happiest people in the world are those who are fortunate enough not to have been born under the star of royalty.

From this standpoint, both Vashti and Cleopatra offer a study and a contrast. Both lived before the

Christian era—the one several centuries, the other some sixty years. Now, Cleopatra was beyond question, I think, the most captivating woman of paganism. Descended from a long line of kings, royal blood flowed in her veins, beauty adorned her person, and brilliance sparkled in her brain. When Nature called for an Egyptian queen, this fascinating Greek princess was the answer. At fourteen she was an accomplished linguist, a student of history, and a skilled musician. At nineteen she conquered the Cæsar who had conquered the world. Forty-six years before the star burned above the Bethlehem manger, she accompanied Cæsar to Rome, where she lived in luxury and pomp until his assassination, when she returned to Egypt. At twenty-eight she met Mark Antony—"a period of life," according to Plutarch, "when woman's beauty is most splendid, and her intellect is in full maturity." Upon the imperious summons of Antony for her to appear before him in Cilicia, charged with having assisted Cassius before the battle of Philippi, hung the destiny of that gifted Roman, and he knew it not.

Like the incomparable Julius, she came, she saw, she conquered! Antony was dazzled, bewitched, enslaved by this siren queen. Ever afterward, with the possible exception of three years, he was her obedient slave. Not satisfied with lavishing silver and gold and precious stones and silks and works of art upon her, he tossed whole kingdoms at her feet, as if they were so many Roman forget-me-nots. He was as helpless in her power as a bird under the hypnotic spell of a snake. At a critical moment in the battle of Actium Cleopatra, for some unknown reason, was seen leaving with her vessels for Egypt. Nevertheless, that vision of the disappearing queen was a signal for Antony to abandon the battle, and follow his sorceress. For strength she gave him weakness; for infatuation she gave him deceit; for idolatry she gave him death.

The Egyptian Delilah had clipped the locks of this Roman Samson, and he wist not that his strength was departed from him.

Now, so far, this bewildering woman has only toyed with strong men, this child of the palace has held the golden bit of destiny between her teeth of pearl, and her gods have not reined her in. But never mind! Her time is coming. After betraying Antony, she retired within the castle which had been built for just such an emergency. Sending her paramour word that she had killed herself, his grief was such that he fell upon his own sword. But he lived long enough to discover that she had deceived him again—this time unto death. Dying and soaked in his own blood, he ordered his servants to carry him to her mausoleum. An unbarred window was the only entrance to her retreat. By ropes he was drawn up through this into her presence, and died. And what became of her—this actor from the palace? Oh, the story is too familiar to be retold: How she tried her charms upon Octavius Cæsar, and failed; how the prospect of being carried a prisoner to Rome stared her in the face, and how, rather than be "led a captive princess up the Capitoline Hill," she died by her own hand. Proud and unyielding to the end, she said to Proculeius:

> Know, sir, that I
> Will not wait pinioned at your master's court,
> Nor once be chastised by the sober eye
> Of dull Octavia. . . .
> . . . Rather a ditch in Egypt
> Be gentle grave to me!

The difference between Vashti and Cleopatra is at once ancient and modern, timeless and eternal: The Persian had moral sense, the Egyptian lacked it, and thus wore a face of brass to the very end. Unlike the sweet-souled Vashti, Cleopatra had no veil of modesty for her face, and she asked none for her soul.

II

In studying the character of this unforgotten queen, we must also reckon with her beauty. "For she was fair to look on." When some genius, equal to the task of writing a history of the tragedy of beauty, appears, the world will find an abiding charm in its pages. For that history will contain a page of joy, a page of sorrow, a page of peace, a page of war, a page of love, a page of hate, a page of poetry, and a page of art. But it will contain many, many pages developing this thought: the tragedy of beauty. Names that have given courage to the warrior's heart; names that have given skill to the sculptor's chisel; names that have given glory to the painter's canvas; names that have given melody to the composer's symphony; names that have given fire to the poet's frenzy; names that have given eloquence to the orator's speech; names that have given immortality to the lover's song—all these will be found in that as yet unwritten volume, wherein the silver of joy will mingle with the bitterness of tears.

And what an array of names this unborn genius will have to adorn his pages! Perhaps the story will run somewhat in this fashion: Helen had beauty; but she plunged the Greeks and Trojans into war. Monna Lisa had beauty, and while painting her, Leonardo surrounded her with music and singers, that he might imprison her sweet smile in color; but she was the wife of another. That baker's daughter on the Tiber had beauty, and Raphael often wooed her to the music of its yellow waves; but death slew him before he won. Beatrice Cenci had beauty; but the guillotine was soaked in her blood at seventeen. Victor Hugo's gifted daughter had beauty; but an unprincipled Englishman made her life a tragedy as dark and deep as Jean Valjean's. Marie Antoinette had beauty; but

she gave a friend a ring set with her own hair, prematurely gray, bearing the inscription: "Bleached by sorrow." Lady Jane Grey had beauty; but this brilliant girl-queen was slain upon the threshold of womanhood. Beatrice Portinari had beauty; but Dante's pain-stitched face wandered through earth and hell before he found, in Paradise, that "Love which moves the sun and the other stars." That unknown sweetheart of John Keats had beauty; but sick and dying at Naples, he wrote: "The silk lining she put in my traveling-cap scalds my head." Heloise had beauty; but that grave yonder in Paris, where she sleeps by the side of her immortal lover, Abelard, recalls a romance-tragedy seven centuries have not blotted out. And so Vashti, the Persian queen, had beauty. To keep it unsullied, she paid the price of a throne and carried a broken heart. But as long as the pulse beats swifter to tales of heroism; as long as the face whitens by dreaming of virtue; as long as the eye brightens from beholding whatsoever things are lovely; as long as the heart waters with its tears the good and the true; as long as womanhood's soul struggles to keep its garments unsoiled and clean, so long will the story of Vashti's unspoiled beauty thrill the hearts of men, and inspire the souls of women to make the refusal made by Xerxes' queen, whatever the cost!

> O Vashti, noble Vashti! Summon'd out
> She kept her state, and left the drunken king
> To brawl at Shushan underneath the palms.

III

Moreover, along with her beauty, Vashti possessed that other quality which lends beauty an enduring freshness and charm: Modesty. For Vashti owes her place in history, I am inclined to think, not so much

to her beauty as to her beautiful modesty. If perchance beauty made her a queen, modesty made her a womanly woman, which is far better. As queen, Xerxes could banish her; as woman, he was defied by her. As queen, he could and did dethrone her; as woman, she sits upon a throne that has hearts for its cushions and centuries for its pillars. The Dubarrys, the Pompadours, the Montespans have their day, and cease to be; but the Vashtis go on forever. The Clytemnestras, the Aspasias, the Cleopatras are meteors flashing through the darkness of unpierced night; the Vashtis are golden suns burning on and on through womanhood's ever-enlarging day!

Indeed, modesty is so inherent an element in the essentials composing genuine beauty that, without modesty, true beauty is impossible. We are indebted to no human law for this truth: God has woven it into the very fabric of human nature. Art critics assure us that the eighteenth century was preeminently the century of woman. Then, we are told, "her grace possessed the most prestige, her coquetry the most disquieting elegance, and her beauty the most triumphant authority." It was the age in which Madame de Pompadour reigned in the court of Louis XV. The brushes of Latour and Boucher have pleaded, with all the eloquence of their genius in art, to deify this daring woman. Voltaire wrote of her beauty, and Montesquieu of her mind. Lord tells us that "Louis XV was almost wholly directed by this infamous favorite." She appointed ministers. She exiled those who incurred her ill will. She sentenced to the Bastile those who ran counter to her imperious wish. She was the patroness of philosophy, art, and song. Through her magic wand Versailles was touched into a pile of architectural magnificence, which has not yet vanished. Her collection of crystals, pictures, cameos, antiques, and gems was unparalleled in the kingdom. She

squandered fortunes on her palaces, fêtes, and balls, and then other fortunes on her toilet. For twenty long years this butcher's daughter held her imperial sway, which was broken only by death.

But when the historian reminds us that it was the dream of her girlhood to seduce the King; that her shameless prodigality makes the cheek of decency burn, and that modesty found no hospitality among her sensual charms, we may well repeat the question of another: "Was La Pompadour beautiful, or merely pretty?" And we instinctively draw back as we would in the presence of a snake as we answer: "She was neither. She was a royal harlot parading in gilded shame, lacking most of all that jewel of modesty which sparkles in the crown of true beauty." For, truly, that French writer of the eighteenth century witnessed a sad confession when he said: "Modesty has fled from our hearts and taken refuge on our lips." Is it not simply another way of saying that the lurid lightnings of unchastity had blasted the fair brow of womanhood in France and that the cannon of the French Revolution were already thundering their protest against a nation's violation of this inviolable law of Almighty God? Alas! for that land whose women forsake their veils of modesty to show the people and the princes their beauty!

IV

But there can be no adequate estimate of our unforgotten queen without considering the price Vashti was compelled to pay to maintain her modesty. For her refusal to come at the king's command was the immediate cause of her dethronement. Surely there are few finer exhibitions of sacrifice in the history of womanhood. We love to read of Telesilla, who united courage with the gift of song, and saved Argos; of

Octavia, shielding the children of Cleopatra, her shameless rival; of Sulpicia, renouncing the pleasures of Rome to go into exile with her husband; of Lucretia, who killed herself rather than live in dishonor; of Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, urging them to deeds of patriotism; of Paula, leaving her palace on Mount Aventine, to walk as an angel of charity through the slums of Rome; yet not one of them outheroines Vashti. For she trod the red road of suffering with a great white purity radiating from her soul.

Nor has history given this lovely queen her dues. We may read much of Lais, who lived in the same century as Vashti, and who was a notorious courtesan; of the immoral Aspasia, who counted Socrates and Pericles among her long list of lovers; of the treacherous Lucilla, who ruled the court of Marcus Aurelius; of Agrippina, the infamous mother of her still more infamous son, Nero. Yet, sadly enough, the events of Vashti's life, like Sappho's songs, are lost. Nevertheless, the picture we have of her in the first and second chapters of Esther will, I think, cause people to look at her forever. She was beautiful in Shushan the palace, and she will be beautiful for all time. She was fair to look on five centuries before Christ, and she will be fair to look on to the end of the world. For her beauty did not depend upon the crown royal, nor upon the admiration of princes, nor upon the approval of a drunken king. Hers was a beauty which does not fluctuate with the supply of millinery, rouge, and perfume. It was Vashti's beauty of soul which proclaims her the forerunner of that renaissance for which humanity is suffering greatly in this third decade of the twentieth contury, viz., *A genuine revival of the old-fashioned, home-spun, unfaded and unfading virtue of womanly modesty.*

While the Bible says nothing of the sacrifice Vashti made, be assured that it was big with pain. Long nights

of sorrow shut her in. She knew the bitterness of friendless days. Not less than Dante, she experienced how hard it is to eat others' bread. But she took no counsel of expediency. Let the king's anger burn within him, let her royal estate be given to another, let the godless court make her a laughing stock, still Vashti never faltered. She knew that beyond her Gethsemane, Ascension Mount was robed in glory. She knew, with queenly women of kindred spirit in every age, that gates of pearl would soon or late swing back to let her in, and that some day she would march to another coronation on High. For this unforgotten queen, and her throneless sisters in spirit wherever found, Riley has sung a tenderly sweet song and a true:

There, little girl—don't cry!
They have broken your doll, I know;
And your tea-set blue,
And your playhouse, too,
Are things of the long ago:
But childish troubles will soon pass by;—
There, little girl—don't cry!

There, little girl—don't cry!
They have broken your slate, I know;
And the glad, wild ways
Of your schoolgirl days
Are things of the long ago:
But life and love will soon come by;—
There, little girl—don't cry!

There, little girl—don't cry!
They have broken your heart, I know;
And the rainbow gleams
Of your youthful dreams
Are things of the long ago:
But Heaven holds all for which you sigh;—
There, little girl—don't cry!

VI

THE SOUL'S UNPAID DEBTS

And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?—II Sam. ix. 1.

Yes; there is at least one left of the house of Saul. His name is Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the grandson of a fallen king. Perhaps history does not contain a more pathetic story than that of Mephibosheth. He was but a baby when his father and grandfather were slain in the battle of Gilboa. But losing Saul and Jonathan was by no means the greatest loss sustained by the baby Mephibosheth. He was prattling in the arms of his nurse when the tragic tidings of Gilboa reached Saul's household. Then it was there happened the accident which threw a black shadow across his entire career. Mephibosheth's nurse was so terrified and excited by the death of the child's father and grandfather that she let him fall from her arms. From that hour he was a cripple, and the historian is careful to make clear the fact that Mephibosheth "was lame on both his feet."

So I need not tarry in an effort to create sympathy for Jonathan's only son. Of course there have been eras in history when these unfortunates were considered a burden to society, and the doctrine of extermination was not only preached but practiced. But since the Son of God went up and down the world

unstopping deaf ears, opening blind eyes, and straightening crooked limbs, the skill of man, the patience of woman, and the power of gold have united in ministering to earth's Mephibosheths. Still, no matter how efficient our ministry to them may be, both by the law of God and of humanity, they have a permanent place in our hearts. And Mephibosheth is no exception. Lame on both his feet, he never knew the wild joy of climbing the hills, of chasing the deer, or of a swim in the Jordan. A pair of crutches need no justification. They are their own most eloquent plea for sympathy.

While tendering Mephibosheth our sympathy, we cannot fail to appreciate the august beauty of the scene which his affliction inspires. Saul has been dead many years, Jonathan's son has reached manhood, and David is on the throne of Israel. I need not say to you that David was a great king, a great poet, and a great statesman, but I do want to say that the greatness of his manhood never shone forth more lustrously than in his magnanimous treatment of the crippled son of Jonathan, for love of whom he spoke the words of my text: "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" The question, and the history growing out of it, suggest a subject which is worth every man's reverent consideration, "The Soul's Unpaid Debts." Yes; and unpayable.

I

Consider, in the first place, David's recognition of the debt he contracted in his youth. Do you remind me that he is now a king, the leader of a conquering army, the creator of a literature which stands unique in the literature of all time? But back of David's throne lie the hills of Bethlehem, back of the great

general stands a shepherd lad, and back of the singer of the eighth Psalm is a devout youth watching God's stars on the plains by night. David's name and fame are known to the wide world now. But this was not always so. Forget the mighty king for a moment, and let your fancy trip backward through the years. You see a little home at Bethlehem-judah. The father's name is Jesse. He has eight sons, the three oldest of whom have enlisted in Saul's army. David was the youngest, and kept his father's sheep. One day his father told him to leave the sheep with a keeper, and take his three brothers in camp something nice to eat. Reaching the camp, David found the army in an uproar and stricken with fear because of the repeated challenges of Goliath. You remember how, when David volunteered to fight the Philistine, his oldest brother Eliab laughed him to scorn. Taken into the presence of the king, Saul said: "David, thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." But this plucky lad, with the strength of omnipotence quivering in his good right arm, slew the boastful giant and restored courage to Israel's army. Still the king did not even know who David was, for he said to Abner: "Inquire thou whose son the stripling is." After slaying the Philistine, David was brought a second time into Saul's presence. This time Saul's son Jonathan, who had already heard of the Hebrew champion, saw David. Then and there sprang up a friendship between these two boys which neither time, nor adversity, nor death, could obliterate. "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." Shortly afterward a deathless covenant was made between them, which was followed by one of the most striking testimonials of love and friendship known to earth: "And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon

him, and gave it to David, and his apparel, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle."

Do you wonder that those far-off days had been burned into the soul of David? Do you wonder that he kept one chamber in his heart sacred beyond all others? Do you wonder that the old king would steal in fancy through the palace halls, walk through the palace doors, and over the hills, and across the streams, to the valley of Elah? Ah! had he not climbed those hills, and waded those streams, and fought in that valley on his way to the throne? Yes; and was it not away back there that God gave him his noblest friendship? Poor, friendless, unknown, Jonathan's love made him rich, Jonathan's friendship made him strong, Jonathan's devotion made him well known! In his palace that night the king was saying to himself: "I have my throne, I have my earthly treasure, I have my army, I have my kingdom; but what are all these compared with my soul's unpaid debt of love and gratitude to Jonathan? The friend of my youth is dead now, and I am an old man; but oh, I wonder if there is yet any left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

Is there one in this congregation who cannot make David's question his own? My friend, has your soul no unpaid debts? Have you no Jonathan standing back there by the golden gateway of youth? If you have not, reverently do I say, may God pity you; for of all persons, you have a right to be the most miserable. But I am persuaded that every soul of us has its Jonathan; and if for one moment these eyes of flesh could be struck through with the revealing light of God, these unpaid creditors would step out of the unseen, all glowing and glorious with celestial beauty.

Because I believe David was a better man after going back in memory to those far-off beginnings, I want us to profit by a like experience. Today you are

a successful business man. By energy and wisdom and economy you have fought your way up past all obstacles, until your feet are at last planted firmly upon the solid rock of commercial prosperity. But no one knows better than you do the anxieties, the uncertainties, the forebodings which have accompanied your rise. Who was it that gave you your first upward push, strengthened you by trusting you, and so set your face toward the shining mount of success? Perhaps he passed from earth long ago. His sun may have set in clouds of gold, or, in the changing fortunes of this world, it may have gone down in clouds of darkness and financial disaster. But this was not the hardest blow your benefactor sustained. The thing that pained him most was that he left behind, to be the toy of fate and circumstance, an unfortunate Mephibosheth. If I have pictured a real situation, then do you gratefully thank God for the opportunity of meeting one of your soul's unpaid debts. Like David, show him kindness for the sake of that Jonathan who stood over against your life when the road was rough, and when there were not as many roses to kiss as there were thorns to prick.

Furthermore, what have you done with the treasure committed unto you by that faithful teacher? Did not he or she play a Jonathan's part in pointing you to the throne you occupy this moment? I know of at least one man in this world who, after his eyes are closed in sleep, often runs in his dreams down the years to sit once more, with the glad heart of a boy, at the feet of the old schoolmaster. There were times when the old fellow's face seemed unkind and his voice a little harsh. But his goodness and nobility have grown with the years, every wrinkle in his face has received a transfigured beauty, and his voice has become as tender and mellow as music heard in dreams. There is that other teacher, also, the one who never failed

you in the Sunday School. As you think of it now, you marvel at her patience and your deplorable manners in those distant days. What more shall we say of these, and countless others, who have forever rendered us their debtors? Did not most of them pass on into the Better Land, not having received the promise of a manhood and womanhood which has been fulfilled because of their loyalty to the Master?

II

Beautiful, indeed, is David's fourfold effort to honor Jonathan's memory through kindness to Mephibosheth. When Ziba told the king that Jonathan had a lame son, David asked at once, "Where is he?" Ziba answered, "He is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, in Lodebar." David said, "Why, that's no place for Jonathan's boy. Mephibosheth is the grandson of a king. His father was my dearest friend. The house of Machir, a stranger, is no place for Jonathan's son. Bring him out." Oh, what a picture is this of Israel's monarch seeking Mephibosheth! Familiar with David the king, and David the poet, and David the warrior, let us not forget David the seeker after the lost. Is not the act a prophecy of the earthly life of "great David's greater Son?" "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." "Who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore God also highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that

every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

After finding Mephibosheth, David restores unto him his lost inheritance. "David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father." Think of how that crippled boy's heart swelled with joy! Watch the tears stream as he says to himself: "Can it be possible that I am to receive all of my grandfather's land back? O King David, you must be mistaken. I am just a poor, lame good-for-nothing, and not worthy of this great kindness." "But you are Jonathan's boy," says David. "Lift your eyes from those crutches to the broad acres lying toward the north, and the south, and the east, and the west. From this moment every foot of it belongs to you, my boy. And this is the happiest hour of my life, Mephibosheth, because it is possible for me to restore unto you your lost inheritance. Nor is that all. Is not Ziba here? Come here, Ziba. How many sons have you, Ziba?" "O King, I am the proud father of fifteen sons." "And how many servants have you, Ziba?" "I have twenty servants, O King." "Very well, Ziba. Now, I want you to become more intimately acquainted with my young friend, Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son." Then I think David's face grew solemn as he said: "Ziba, all that pertained to Saul and to his house have I given unto thy master's son. And thou shalt till the land for him, thou, and thy sons, and thy servants; and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have bread to eat."

Let us confess that David was every inch a king in his treatment of Mephibosheth; but let us remember, also, that David's gift is poor indeed compared with God's "unspeakable gift" to every believing heart. Has your lost inheritance been restored unto you, my

brother, by the King of Kings? If not, why not? Dare you charge Him with unwillingness? The most beautiful stone in Heaven's jewel case is yours for the asking: "To him that overcometh, to him will I give of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it." Dare you charge Him with remissness or impatience? "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness; but is long-suffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Dare you charge Him with imperfect teaching? Jesus says: "My teaching is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man willeth to do His will, He shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God." Dare you charge Him with offering a meager inheritance? "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who according to His great mercy begot us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

But David was not content with finding Mephibosheth, nor with restoring his lost inheritance, beautiful and kingly as these acts were. He invited him to the palace. "Thou shalt eat bread at my table continually." When you helped that poor fellow out of the gutter you didn't invite him home with you, did you? Why not? Were his clothes ragged and soiled, and did you not want to be seen in his company? When you passed something to eat through the window to that man out of work, it never once occurred to you that he would enjoy your dining room. When that nameless woman promised you she was going to lead a life of chastity, did you say: "Come to my home,

and by the grace of God, I'll help you?" I am not asking these questions to create an opportunity for criticism. I bring them home that we may thoroughly appreciate what David did. It is easy to throw the beggar a crust, and buy the cripple a crutch, and ask the impure to be pure. But it is hard to say: "Come, and eat bread at my table continually. Come up out of your low condition to my companionship. Come, bring your life that it may be touched by my life." Yet that is just what David did, and it is that which gives the splendor of Divinity to his deed. Mephibosheth might have protested: "Don't ask me to come to your palace, O King. I have no charms with which to grace your court. My affliction has made me shun the society of men. Therefore, I have reached an awkward, uncouth, uncultured manhood. Think me not ungracious for your kindness for my father's sake, but do not ask me to the palace." And what did David say? By his act he said: "Mephibosheth, I am not ashamed of your crutches, nor your awkwardness, nor your lack of culture. It is enough for me, my boy, that you are Jonathan's son. I owed something to your father long before I owed anything to another: a duty can never set aside a duty. And as to what I owe you now, it becomes more and more the noblest earthly debt that I shall ever leave unpaid."

Think you that our Divine David is less generous than Jonathan's friend? Oh, I tell you no! He invites us not to a palace, but to a city of palaces. "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you." And on the day of the great reception, He will not entertain us by proxy. He says: "I will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." But He does not keep all the good things until we have passed into another world. Here and now He offers a panacea for earth's troubled hearts.

He says: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me." Here and now He extends the calm of His peace to every unquiet soul: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Nor is our David ashamed of our misfortunes. When an artist painted a portrait of Alexander of Macedon, the king rested his face in his hand as if he were in deep study. But he was simply trying to hide an ugly scar. The Son of God is not ashamed of our scars, nor of our lame feet, nor of our dim vision, nor of our soiled garments. Calvary's blood washes out every scar, imparts new life to every crippled soul, removes the dimness from blinded eyes, and whitens the garments of the heart into snowlike purity!

III

Finally, I should be unfaithful to this history, if I left the impression that Mephibosheth came to David's palace as a mere visitor. David's kindness towers into its highest possible beauty when he declares: "Mephibosheth shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons." Was it not grand to have been sought out by a king? Was it not splendid to have had the lost inheritance restored? Was it not glorious to have been invited to the king's palace? But the grandeur and splendor and glory of all fades before the mighty truth that henceforth Mephibosheth is as one of the king's sons!

And this, my brothers, is the heart of our religion—that every human being may be as one of the King's sons. But you say: "Is it not possible for you to be mistaken?" Oh, no, I am not mistaken. I may be mistaken in the beauty of morn, the glory of night, the song of birds, the gold of autumn; I may be mistaken in the glowing prophecies of hope, the sacred dreams

of youth, the treasured memories of childhood, the lessons learned at the family fireside. But I tell you I am not mistaken in this—that we are, or may be, as one of the King's sons. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

Oh, man, for love of you, the King left His throne. He seeks you out. He offers to restore your lost inheritance. He invites you to the palace. He asks you to be as one of the King's sons. Will you not pay the unpaid debt of an immortal soul by coming home? The best robe and the sweetest harp shall be yours!

VII

A SUNSET LIFE *

Leaving this home on last Sunday afternoon, I witnessed a memorable and magnificent sunset. The whole west was aglow with splendor. Huge sheets of color-flame shot all over the sundown heavens. All the colors of the rainbow seem to have been taken up into that vesper-sky and made to burn with an intensity and brilliance such as no rainbow ever manifests. Molten coals of color flashed and kindled upon the altars of Infinite Beauty. Having had its diamond morning and silver noon, the dying Day was now wrapping its jeweled robes around its perfect close.

By a kind of nameless spell, I have been associating that sunset sky with this sunset life. There is a suggestive and kindred richness in each. As the one stands for the end of a perfect day, so the other stands for the end of a long and noble life. We do violence to both Nature and Man by driving an unnatural and irreligious wedge of separation between them. For the God of physical nature and the God of human nature is the selfsame God. Saint Paul has given immortal expression to this truth: "Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, Who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The apostle is here thinking of a note sounded in the great Hymn of

* An address delivered at the funeral of Mrs. Erskine M. Phelps, January 10, 1922.

Creation: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." Thus the light in the sky and the light in the soul come from the same Divine Source.

I

One could not help being impressed by the variety of colors which gorgeously commingled in that western sky. All the primary colors seemed to smile from the wondrous face of evening. Red and orange and yellow and green and blue and indigo and violet—all bloomed forth like so many twinkling petals in that immense vesper flower.

So, also, was there a splendid variety in this life. Mrs. Phelps was built after a large pattern of womanhood. Consider a few of the colors glowing through her human sky. She was a Homebuilder. We know that there is a wide difference between a house and a home. There are scores who know how to build a palatial house for one who knows how to build a beautiful home. Our vanished friend did both. You have only to look around you to see that here is a house constructed in a magnificent fashion. Furnishings from many lands are here; tokens of beauty from many artists adorn these walls and floors. But to this stately house she added the poetry and charm of a soulful home. Never was it more necessary for society to realize the quickening inspirations of great homelife than today. This woman fostered the high traditions of domestic worth in a noble manner. Blessed are the Homebuilders; for they shall be called the molders of Golden Tomorrows!

Another color attesting the variousness of this sunset life shines forth in her Humanitarianism. Mrs. Phelps' heart throbbed responsively to the essential heartbeats of humanity. If the deeds done in the body and for the helping of human beings serve to make up one's

account in the Ledger of Eternal Wealth, then this goodly soul is now at home in a Realm where her spiritual dividends are very large. The Final Authority in such matters said: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me." Since Jesus entered into our humanity its value has been enormously increased. Notwithstanding the apparent cheapness of human beings as represented in their waste and destruction, there is, nevertheless, because of Christ's interpretation of the soul, an inalienable conviction that our humanity is of exceeding greatness and worth in the Eyes of God. Slowly—very slowly—we are catching up with the Master's vision of human worth even in the midst of its unspeakable humiliation. But have there not always been elect souls swift to appreciate Christ's evaluation of every soul? And this beloved woman was among them. Her philanthropy was not confined to any set or circle. The cry of human need reached her ears with irresistible eloquence. It moved her to the doing of those golden deeds which are written down in God's Golden Book of Life. Gathered even now within these ample walls are some—the halt, the lame, and the defeated in life's uneven contest—who are tearful witnesses to her generosity and loving kindness. Yesterday afternoon as I was about to enter this house, I met a little maiden coming from school. "We have lost a good friend, haven't we?" I said. I received an instant answer, yet not in words, because not one word could be spoken by the child. There was a lump in her throat and a moisture in her eye. I rejoiced in her wordless eloquence, which puts the eloquence of words to shame.

Still another color appears in her record as a Business Woman. In this connection it is well to remember that Mrs. Phelps' business career did not begin early in life or even in her prime. The fact is, she

mastered the science of business—and I am sure that you men consent that I have not used a misleading phrase in terming modern business a science—rather late in her years. At a time when many are thinking of retiring from business she was compelled, by force of circumstances, to take up the large interests of her husband, Mr. Erskine Phelps. Shielded from the worries of business most of her life, she now accepted her new responsibilities and discharged them, as we all know, with remarkable ability. As our dear Dr. Gunsaulus used to say: "She is the best business *man* I have ever known." Have you considered what a fine interpretation she gave the words of the ancient wise man: "Seest thou a man diligent in business? He shall stand before kings?" Here was a woman who, into the sky of her amazing versatility, projected this most unusual color: She was so capable and diligent in business that kings of business gladly stood before her!

Nor must I forget that within her wide-colored sky was set fast the glowing hue of Friendship. The roots of her nature ran out everywhere in quest of friendly waters. She was a flesh-and-blood illustration of Kingsley's celebrated definition: "A friend is one whom we can always trust; who knows the best and the worst of us, and who cares for us in spite of our faults." Surely, her friends could trust her; they felt that she was keenly alive to their virtues and charitably blind to their failures; in brief, they knew that she cared for them in spite of their faults. Does not this style of friendship leap across all human frontiers and home in the Land that is Divine? As we know, the beautiful plant of friendship cannot be forced. It has to grow; and to grow, it must have the right environment—a kind of invisible soil brooded over by an invisible sun and watered by an invisible rain. In other words, the shrub of friendship requires a certain

atmosphere. This woman generated that atmosphere; her soul-climate was so wholesome and so filled with the elements of invigorating tonic, that friendship's fragrant plant throve handsomely in the Garden of her Soul.

II

Besides its variety, I was profoundly impressed by the completeness of that sunset I saw on Sunday evening. Within its throbbing bosom there were vast heights and depths and breadths and lengths of color. The whole sundown sky seemed to have caught fire from some immense conflagration fed by burning worlds, itself being doomed to burn up with consuming completeness. Or, to change the figure, there were golden oceans of color, silver lakes of color, emerald rivers of color, violet brooks of color, orange rills of color. The entire vesper heavens were glowing and flowing. My sky was authentic with satisfying completeness.

Was not this sunset life likewise crowned with suggestive completeness? Consider her in length of days. She attained unto not only threescore years and ten, but unto fourscore and more. Set over against the background of Eternity, a thousand years in God's sight may be but as yesterday when it is past or even as a watch in the night; but set over against the vicissitudes and uncertainties of a world like ours, eighty odd years mark a long and eventful journey. Our friend fulfilled the seven ages of infancy, childhood, youth, womanhood, wifehood, maturity, ripeness—and then crowned them all with a *youthful old age!* A young old age is God's last benediction to great character in this world.

Yet does not this bring us to the second touchstone of her completeness—quality of being? There was

something arrestingly harmonious in the unfolding of her powers. Did she not have a fine mind? Why, that clifflike, frontal brain seemed to say: "I am the home of a rare mentality." No one could stay long in her presence, while her wise, fertile words fell like drops of rain, without being made distinctly aware that hers was a mind of large caliber. Yet how often does the great mind reside in a kind of arctic coldness, hung with the unthawed icicles of logic and reason, unmelted by the genial warmths and heats of the heart. This was not true of her. Mind and heart were becomingly married in the sanctuary of her soul, so that these twain became one—one in their harmonious functioning, one in their clear and mellow judgments, one in their fused and challenging completeness.

III

But that Sunset Artist was not content with painting variety and completeness upon his illimitable sky-canvas. Sending his beauty clean around the horizon, he also left a sunrise touch upon the fair and far face of the enchanted east. His afterglow was as lovely as his foreglow or midglow.

Likewise, is not the afterglow of this sunset life even richer than its morningglow, noonglow, or vesperglow? Say what we will, Death has an inviolable majesty as well as a definite clarifying power. "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man," said Jesus, "then shall ye know that I am He." Christ's lifting up on the Cross would contain an expositional power quite wanting even in His teaching and deeds. Is it not so, in some measure, of all true lives which have been lifted up by the mysterious hands of Death? Standing by the silent form of our beloved friend yesterday afternoon, I could not resist saying aloud the words Edwin Arling-

ton Robinson puts on the tongue of John Brown: "I shall have more to say when I am dead."

Then what an eloquence indeed proceeds from the mute lips of her whom we commemorate! Does she not have even more to say now than when we listened to the tones of her voice? With what words of hope and courage and inspiration does she address her brother, sisters, nephews, nieces, and friends! When the sister who loved her beyond the power of words remarked that her own lifework seems to have ended with the passing of this dear woman, immediately the brother replied: "Not at all, my dear! She would have us catch up the colors, never allowing them to fall!" That is indeed the Christian spirit. And it is in this spirit that I now wish to read some lines which have been read at the homegoing of several members of this family:

My summons may come in the morning,
Or in the deep, peaceful slumber of night.
It may come with a lingering warning,
Or as quick as a flash of sunlight.
It may come when I'm thinking of Heaven,
It may come when my thoughts are astray,
While I'm sitting alone in my dwelling,
Or greeting some friend on the way.
But the day or the hour that the bidding comes
To me, I never can know;
And I pray, at the call of the Master, I may answer:
"I'm ready to go."

It may come when I'm working for others,
Or laying out plans for myself.
It may come when I'm laid like a well-worn
And useless old book on a shelf.
It may come when my life, full of sweetness,
Would fain have it tarry a while.
It may come when my sorrow's completeness

Makes me welcome its call with a smile.
Though it fall in the gentlest of whispers,
Or sound with a deep, startling knell,
I pray only that I may be ready to answer:
"Dear Lord, it is well."

VIII

THE HIGHER TONES OF THANKSGIVING

But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.—Acts I. 8.

Someone said of Gladstone that he was the first man in England as to intellectual power, and that he had heard higher tones than any other man in the land. It is an arresting phrase, especially that part referring to "higher tones." For hearing the "higher tones" spells the difference between first- and second-class manhood. It marks the distinction between the secondary and the essential.

Now, there are many things in a world like ours to kindle the fires of gratitude at this season. There are country, church, home, work, friendship, faith, hope, love—why the list is a very long one indeed. Yet, frankly, the purpose of this sermon is to emphasize the source of all true thanksgiving. Just before His ascension, the disciples had many immediate and pressing problems for the Master to solve. One of the most important, in their thinking, was the date of restoring the Kingdom to Israel. What an answer our Lord gave! "And He said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority." The religious calendar-makers were already in evidence in the apostolic college, yet the Master knew that there was something of

more importance than times and seasons. "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Here, then, are those "higher tones" of thanksgiving which need to be heard throughout Christendom today.

I

Consider the meaning of power. Tracing the word in its etymological bearings, we find that the word power means to "be able." And this is just what the Master said to the disciples: You shall receive ability to perform the tremendous task before you.

Wisely measured, what greater blessing could come to human beings than the ability to live as human beings? Stripped of all secondary implications, this is the primary meaning of the Holy Spirit. He empowers us to be Christians in word and deed. Evidently, God has no other way by which the meaning of Christian power manifests itself in and through human consciousness. Drummond used to quote the words of Huxley: "I protest that if some great Power would agree to make me always think what is true and do what is right, on condition of being turned into a sort of clock, and wound up every morning, I should instantly close with the offer." The figure of a clock is not very appealing; it betrays a kind of mechanical wooden-mindedness for which certain scientific minds are notorious when attempting to function in the realm of Christian reality. And yet, does not God in Christ do a far greater work than Huxley's clock-winding Power suggests? For a Christian is not a human clock to be wound up at certain periods; he is a branch grown into the True Vine. He is not a ma-

chine shop of whizzing wheels, but a branch pulsing with life from the Vine of God. Or, better still, he is a partaker of the Divine Nature; he and God are working together for his complete self-realization.

Now this, I take it, is the meaning of the ability which Christ, through the Holy Spirit, gives to every believing and achieving soul. Everything else is philosophy, psychology, and theology—all very good, but not good enough to be substituted for this inner creative unfolding of the soul in process of christianization. I say in process, for the best among us are little better than kindergarteners in the School of Christ. "Now are we children of God," says Saint John, "and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is. And every one that hath this hope set on Him purifies himself, even as He is pure." Think of the wonderful thought-movement in this familiar passage! First, we are children—we are not grown-ups; second, we are children of God *now*—no matter whether our bodies were millions of years coming up through the lower orders, or a few days. Let science, as it has the right and duty to do, deal with man's past. Christianity has a sublimer work—it deals with our present and our future. Therefore, and in the third place, these golden words of the apostle are surcharged with our present and future immortality in Christ Jesus. Finally, the soul motivated by this transforming hope, dwells in the cleansing fires of God, keeping himself pure, even as He is pure.

Does not this fundamental meaning of the Christian soul in action send us straight to those profound beginnings which are implicit in our far-off endings? It is the Christian fact we must have today—nothing else can save civilization from destroying itself. Therefore, let every one who names the name of Christ not

only depart from evil and do good, but go clean past words and symbols, even creeds themselves, if they enmesh us in verbally entangling alliances—straight to the fountain-head of life and joy and peace and righteousness in the Holy Ghost. In driving over the country in Summer, one sometimes passes a magnificent estate. But the mansion, setting far back from the highway, cannot be seen for the heavy foliage. Go out in these Autumn days, and what a change! Those green leaves have all gone golden, and the windsickle has cut and blown them from the branches—"bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang." Yes; the foliage is gone, but the great house is visible, dominating the landscape in its stately magnificence. And sometimes the foliage of formality and creed and scholasticism becomes so dense that the mansions of Christian reality are quite hidden. Then is it high time for a new individual, social, national, and international Pentecost—when there shall come from Heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, stripping the verbal foliage from the trees of theory and lifeless tradition, that the House of Reality may stand forth clear and splendid in the atmosphere of the Holy Spirit.

II

Consider, also, the privilege of power. Many, in thinking of the present activity of the Eternal Christ through the Holy Spirit, dwell altogether too much upon the problem and too little upon the privilege. That the Holy Spirit is a problem for thought, sixty generations of Christian thinkers prove. And yet I sometimes wonder if we shall ever have an adequate philosophy of the Holy Spirit. But whatever the metaphysics of the matter may be, it is certain that our Lord, in the hour of His disappearance from the

borders of sense, thought of it as a privilege to be seized, enjoyed, and employed by His followers. The fact is, here is the privilege supreme and permanent. What an interesting thing it is to hear people recount their privileges. One, for example, recalls hearing Jenny Lind sing. To this day, he declares, he feels the thrill of her bright, brilliant, sympathetic soprano voice. Another remembers the hour in which he grasped the hand of Lincoln. He tells about it in tones of trembling, broken eloquence. Or a man and woman think of the hour in which they exchanged eyes and hearts—and is there not a throb of gratitude every time they recall that fateful hour? Another considers how the hand of a vanished teacher was laid upon him many, many years ago, and he says: "I shall never be able to repay my old teacher." Still another thinks of his first sight of "the first great international statesman." And does not something akin to the gratitude of Raphael stir in his soul? "I thank God," said the painter of "The Transfiguration," "that I live in the times of Michael Angelo!"

These all suggest very dear and sacred privileges—so great, indeed, that they can scarcely be excelled. It is only as we make our way into the precincts of the Most High that we come in sight of anything their equal or superior. But we are immediately in that realm as we hear the Master emphasize the privilege of receiving the ability which He imparts through the Holy Spirit. What the most exalting friendship is incapable of doing; what the one memorable and thrilling experience fails to accomplish; what the most moving eloquence, the most enchanting music, the most dazzling beauty cannot achieve, entering into the privilege of soul-power through the Holy Spirit abundantly and abidingly brings to pass. He gathers up all that is true and lovely and worthful and transforms it into joy which abides forevermore.

So great a privilege is not suddenly understood and appreciated. Little by little do we learn the secret of performing on these immortal instruments of heart, mind, and spirit. I once heard an unforgettable story of Josef Hoffman. While touring the country, he had to change trains at a railway junction. It was just a small village with a few stores, postoffice, and hotel. Hoffman was in the hotel waiting for his train. In the parlor was a piano, which enabled him to while away the time playing. The great pianist played piece after piece. The instrument seemed to realize its true capacity for the first time. As the thrilling strains rose at the master's touch, the village music teacher walked up to Josef Hoffman and said: "Say, young man, if you keep on practicing, you'll make a musician yet." I wonder what the old piano would have said, if it could have felt and talked? Something like this, I fancy: "Well, this is the crowning day of my life. I never knew such melodies were slumbering on my wires before. Others have played me, but somehow there were more discords than music. Now my true master has found me." And then one thinks of the naïve words of the village music teacher. Far more than he realized, practice was the secret of Hoffman's wonderful playing. Is it not also true that we realize our privileges in Christ by constant practice? We become musicians of the Holy Ghost, one accent of which is never lost, as we betake ourselves into the melody-room of our unseen Master and learn, through beautiful doing, what can never be taught by merely sympathetic listening. A visitor to this country said that Niagara Falls is the greatest unused power in the world. "No, my friend," replied the Christian man to whom the traveler was talking, "the greatest unused power in the world is the power of the Holy Spirit." Greater than all physical forces, than all solar energies, than all human ingenui-

ties whatsoever, is the ever-present, triumphantly enabling power of the Holy Spirit! Is it not a privilege to work through Him, as He works in and through us?

III

The meaning and privilege lead us direct to the *source* of the ability which the Lord Christ promises. "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you." For we must never obscure the origin of the soul's victorious and completing power. Lesser ways of self-realization are always in vogue. Fads, cults, science falsely so-called, and philosophies sprung from the ancient East and modern West—all are as busy as bees which make no honey! Now, what the Master is saying is this: You are spirits, imperfect and ungrown as yet; but He, the All-perfect and Absolute, the Holy Spirit shall indwell you and quicken you into fullness of being. Does not this go to the root of the matter? Are we not all spirits? Certainly we are! And yet the vast majority of people act as if they were essentially bodies of flesh, and nothing more. Why, the least important thing about a man is his body. And one ventures this, knowing the glory and honor and sacredness with which Christianity invests our bodily house. Divinely organized dust, the body is indeed the temple of the Holy Ghost. But making it the temple of so many other things, men inevitably conclude that their bodies are all-important. Consequently, the only power they have any conception of is some manifestation of physical energy—dynamic, kinetic, atomic, or molecular. Suppose such are asked, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" For all practical purposes, their threefold answer would be: We have never believed, received, nor heard of Him! And these, let it be remembered, are modern,

up-to-date men! They are, in fact, some two thousand years behind the times.

No; there is no substitute for the source of the life which is life indeed. Men and women are alive only when the Holy Spirit is come upon them. Otherwise, in the New Testament all the physical figures of distress and incapacity are invoked to describe their spiritual condition. They are "blind"; they are "deaf"; they are "dumb"; they are "dead." A scientist was studying a heather bell in its native haunts. Taking his microscope into the Highlands of Scotland, he lingered long over the heather bell, with its lilac rose color. While down upon his knees that he might get very close to the bloom, a shadow passed over the microscope. Thinking it was just a passing cloud, the naturalist waited. But the shadow did not lift. Then he was aware that someone was peering over his shoulder. Looking up, the scientist saw a big, brawny Highland shepherd. Plucking the lovely flower, the naturalist handed both the instrument and the heather bell to the shepherd that he, too, might have a close-up view of one of God's beautiful creations. The shepherd looked until the tears began to flow. Then he tenderly handed the microscope and the flower back to the naturalist as he said: "I wish you had never shown me that. I wish I had never seen it." "Why?" exclaimed the scientist. "Because, mon," the shepherd answered, "these rude feet have trodden on so many of them." Thus men, "blind," "deaf," "dumb," and "dead," though very efficient, very clever, very modern, walk rudely and crudely over the glorious plants in the Garden of God. But when their eyes are opened, when they become aware of the source of all true ability, when the Holy Spirit is come upon them—then do tears of penitence wash away the dirt and grime that obscure their vision and they see the Rose of Sharon.

IV

"But how are these Christian vitalities realized?" you ask. The answer is at hand. The occupants of that upper room fulfilled two conditions, and so must every human being. The first may be defined as waiting. "He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to *wait* for the promise of the Father." Waiting does not here signify folded arms and a lazy mind. It means aliveness, alertness. In a living universe, the soul that waits for God is one of the livest creatures in it. So dismiss at once the thought that spiritual waiting implies lolling or loafing. "I will stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me." Habakkuk, that watchfully waiting prophet, was on the tiptoe of wonder and expectation. Oh, no, it is not an easy thing to wait. When you go to the railway station to meet your friend, are you not a combination of anxiety, curiosity, and excitement? If the train schedules are confused and out of order, your waiting becomes a kind of active eagerness to find one face among the hurrying throngs. Nor is it otherwise when the soul goes to meet its God. "I look for the Lord," is its confession and present tense activity. "My soul doth wait for Him: in His word is my trust." And "word" does not here merely mean that which is written in the roll of the Law or elsewhere; it means the creative Logos, the Eternal Christ, in Whom I am trusting even now, and while I wait.

Is not the significance of life, after all, in the soul allowing God to fulfill His promises to the soul? When we do this, we begin to live throughout our whole being. I was watching men work on a house. They had laid the foundation and the walls were rising. The brick masons, hod carriers, and carpenters were all interested, of course, though some of them proceeded

with the project in a somewhat leisurely fashion. But on going to the far side of the structure, I saw something that instantly changed the whole outlook. A woman was standing there, watching and waiting for the hour when the building would be completed. She was a wife and mother. That building was no longer just a house; the waiting, watching, brooding mother turned it into a prospective home. Just so is the impersonal and meaningless phase of life turned into significance and value as the soul waits for the Father's fulfillment of His promise through the Holy Spirit. Before this is done, man's life is a kind of mechanically-wrought house, with half-hearted workers doing their task; but when the Holy Spirit is come upon us, the mothering wonders of God so dominate and transform everything that the half-built house becomes a complete home.

The second condition is praying. "These all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer." Praying is not just saying prayers; it is the loftiest action of the soul. Two facts command us as we allow this olden history to mingle with and interpret experience. The first is this: Praying, we expose our souls to God. That is what those men and women did at Pentecost. They so exposed their whole natures to the spiritual world that each became a unit of power, fiery and glowing, while the Spirit had His majestic and glorifying way with them. The second fact is the resultant harmony. When souls are exposed to God through faith and prayer, divine harmonies inevitably respond to such high human unity. This must be so, because "the worlds are built in order and the atoms march in tune." I was invited to a radio concert. Knowing that some of the world's supreme artists were to have part, I quickly accepted the invitation. But late in the afternoon, word came that the concert would have to be postponed because my friend's apparatus was out of

order. And yet the very same concert was enjoyed by people all over the country because their wireless was *not* out of commission. The singers sang, the speakers spoke, the musicians played, but our apparatus was out of order! Oh, men and women, are we missing celestial concerts because our spiritual apparatus is untuned? As more things are wrought by prayer than men dream of, so spiritual orchestras and heavenly eloquence are unheard because we are not in tune through waiting and praying and serving. But we shall have ability to will and to hear and to do when the Holy Spirit is come upon us!

V

Does not this bring us to the appropriation of power? "And ye shall be My witness both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." We are witnesses—that is, we are to translate into deed this holy and Christ-inspired creed. And is it not greatly original work? The credibility of a witness depends upon his first-hand information. No warmed-over, hearsay information-monger is he! *He knows, and he knows that he knows!* That is the distinction of a true witness.

Suppose, therefore, that we give a genuinely practical rendering to this witness-bearing privilege and obligation, as set forth by our Master. "Ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem"—let that stand for home and church; "and in all Judea"—let that stand for all business and industrial relations; "and Samaria"—let that stand for all untoward caste and rising tides of color; "and unto the uttermost part of the earth"—let that stand for exactly what it means: that in the sight of God's Christ our petty, chauvinistic, war-begetting nationalisms, fed by the fires of partisanship, jealousy, avarice, and personal hatreds, have no place whatso-

ever, and that it is the duty of every Christian to withstand all such abominable buncombe, whether it originates in the state houses of London, Berlin, or Washington, or the nations named Russia, Turkey, or America. For when Christians appropriate the power God has placed at their disposal, they can regenerate the social, industrial, national, and international life of the world. But the Pentecostal fire must burn in the heart of each before it can enkindle the souls of all. And this is life—eternal life here and now, by the help and through the vision of God in Christ, Whose quickening ability is mediated in the Holy Spirit.

So he died for his faith. That is fine.
More than the most of us do.
But stay. Can you add to that line
That he *lived* for it, too?

It is easy to die. Men have died
For a wish or a whim—
From bravado or passion or pride.
Was it hard for him?

But to *live:* every day to live out
All the truth that he dreamt,
While his friends met his conduct with doubt,
And the world with contempt.

Was it thus that he plodded ahead,
Never turning aside?
Then we'll talk of the life that he led.
Never mind how he died!

IX

THE JUNIPER TREE

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.—I Kings, XIV. 4.

BECAUSE one touch of Nature makes the whole world kin, Elijah under the juniper tree looks very much like a human brother. Hitherto he has taught us to view him from afar, as we would a mountain eagle bathing in the upper air. Of all men, Elijah is the last to elicit our sympathy. His strength is of such rugged mold that we never think of baptizing him with tears. Abraham was strong, but as we behold him threading his unknown way, lit up only by the invisible torch called faith, his very loneliness challenges our fellow-feeling. Moses was strong, but his passionate longing for new visions of God's glory, along with his heroic self-abnegation, melts us heart and soul. Saul was strong, but the pathetic manner in which this royal prodigal fritters away his strength, is a tragedy too deep for tears. David was strong, but the melodies of this high-souled son of song, throbbing with weeping music of repentance for the sin of his soul, make our hearts bow before his great human sobs, as peach-blossoms bow before Summer rains. So, also, Elijah was strong, but his strength seems always sufficient unto itself. It is the strength of the oak, devoid of

its harp-like qualities. It is the strength of the mountain, with no meadow-lark to flood it with song. It is the strength of the storm, terrible for its violence. It is the strength of the thunder, majestic in its roll. It is the strength of the lightning, dazzling in its fiery activity. It is the strength of Vesuvius, with righteous indignation eating out its heart, and human Pompeiis lying at its foot.

But our text asks us to forget the Elijah we commonly know, for he has been suddenly stripped of his colossal strength. And it is precisely this, I think, that renders the juniper tree scene doubly pathetic. If Elijah had never had any strength to lose, we should not care to stop and ask the cause of his present despair. But the very fact that the Delilah of despondency has clipped the locks of his strength, makes us confess that, after all, the volcanic Tishbite was a man of like passions as ourselves. To me that juniper tree is a better commentary on Elijah than Matthew Henry ever dared to be. With all his persuasive powers, the theologian could never win me over to love Elijah. If I wanted to go out with a man who would frighten an Ahab out of his wits, or a Jezebel out of her sleep, of all men in history, Elijah would be that man. But if I wanted a man to love, I think Elijah would be about the last one, unless I could find him, as I have in the text, sitting under the juniper tree, down and out of the fight, completely whipped by an old-fashioned, long-faced, rainy-day case of the blues. Any man that is human enough to get the "dumps," can get my love; not because there is any peculiar virtue in becoming despondent, but the very fact that he does, thus bearing the stamp of our variable natures, entitles him to a claim upon my love and sympathy.

Whatever its cause, we have to admit that despondency cannot be reasoned away. It feeds upon strength, it companions with genius, it laughs at philosophy.

Aristotle held that all men of genius are melancholy. But this is not saying that because you are capable of melancholy, you are a genius, which might be a somewhat injudicious confusion of terms. However, it may be consoling for us to know that Dr. Johnson was such a prey to hypochondria that at times "he could not distinguish the hour upon the town clock." Gray was miserable except in the company of visitors. Bunyan had his hours when the sun itself grudged to give light. Curran kept the tables roaring by the flow of his wit, but he "declared that he never went to bed without wishing that he might not rise again." Grimaldi, the actor, when off the stage was painfully melancholy. Michael Angelo, in a fit of despondency, was discovered chipping away one of his immortal marbles. There were times when Raphael said he could not paint. There were times, also, when Verdi could not compose, and when Byron and Burns could not sing. Asked how we do, most of us have hours when Mr. Trepid's reply would be appropriate: "A great deal worse than I was, thank'e; 'most dead, I'm obliged to you,—I'm always worse than I was, and I don't think I was ever any better. I'm going off some of these days, right after my grandfather, dying of nothing in particular, but of everything in general. That's what finishes our folks." And that's what finishes most folks!

I

Looking for the cause of Elijah's despondency, we shall find, in the first place, that it had its origin in the feeling that his life work was a failure. If nothing succeeds like success, nothing fails like failure. And it was this dark-visaged giant that helped to throw Elijah down under the juniper tree. As a matter of fact, Elijah succeeded magnificently. Single-handed he stood up against two kingdoms. On the one hand,

he kept Israel from drifting hopelessly away from God, while on the other he rolled back the destructive tides of heathenism. When we consider his stupendous task and the means for its accomplishment, Elijah may well be compared with the great conquerors and statesmen of the world. Pericles ruled Athens for thirty years, but before his death he saw that classic land enter upon the beginning of the end. Alexander, "the youth who all things but himself subdued," built an empire that went down in ruins almost as quickly as his own brilliant career of thirty-three years. Cæsar was one of the greatest men that ever lived, but "he was not great enough to rise from the position of chief of a party to that of chief of a nation, and he was cut off, leaving no system of government that could last." Cromwell was a most extraordinary man, but his Commonwealth lasted only one year, eight months and five days after his death. Frederick carved out a splendid military state, but when his hand was withdrawn, the Prussian monarchy hastened on to the battlefield of Jena, where it went up in powder and smoke. Napoleon wove from the crimson threads of the French Revolution a fabric of empire that dazzled the world, but like a fallen Mars at St. Helena, with empires still rising and falling in his brain, he dreamed that its vanished splendor was still but a dream. But Elijah, with no prowess except his rugged honesty, with no genius except his simple faith in God, with no military equipment except the fire he called out of the skies, with no home except the cave in the mountain, set forces in motion that cleared the way for the coming of the Kingdom of God. Surely his life work was not a failure, but under the juniper tree "his brain was lined with black," and he peered into a gulf of blank despair!

And we all have our juniper trees, when life itself seems a dismal failure. Then we read a new meaning into Elijah's prayer, because it becomes our own: "It

is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." And yet it is a very foolish prayer, as our later judgment convinces us. For God was still in His heaven, and right was still might, and the songbirds were still in the sky, and flowers still bloomed at our feet, though we knew it not. Oh, no! Elijah's life work was not a failure. The demon of despondency cannot shatter work fashioned according to the plan of eternal truth. Already God's angel was standing near to touch the gloomy prophet. Already Horeb, with its threefold chorus of wind and earthquake and fire, was waiting to teach Elijah that God is not in the thunder of life's noise, but in the still small voice of conscience and duty. Let us have our juniper tree experiences, if God sends them, but let us not be mastered by them. In Christian contentment and faith, let us rather sing with John Burroughs:

Serene I fold my hands and wait,
Nor care for wind or tide or sea;
I rave no more 'gainst time or fate,
For, lo, my own shall come to me.

The stars come nightly to the sky,
The tidal wave unto the sea;
Nor time nor space, nor deep nor high
Can keep my own away from me.

II

We may discover another cause of Elijah's despondency in his surroundings. "But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness." If that isn't enough to give a man the blues, then there's something the matter with him, that's all. In studying the problem of despondency, we have to reckon with our surroundings. You can't keep an ice-cold Northerner in

Southern soil, any more than you can keep a sunny-hearted Southerner amid northern snows. That is why the wilderness is not friendly toward hilarious, triumphant spirits. We are not surprised that the Englishman is full of gloom, because his system is full of fog. The Scotchman borrows much of his seriousness from the dull, rainy days that curtain Scotland in. Cross the Channel and you are in touch with the light-hearted French. France is the land of gay hearts largely because dreamy skies bend over it, and golden sunshine falls upon it. By way of illustrating this thought, Professor Mathews recalls the story of a French opera dancer, who sunk twenty-five thousand dollars in Waterloo Bridge, which spans the Thames in London. The shares he bought at five hundred dollars suddenly dropped to seventy-five dollars. This would have afforded an Englishman an excellent opportunity to bring his pistol or razor into play, or else to have jumped into the Thames to escape his troubles; but not so the Frenchman. It is said he paraded the arches of that great structure every day, halting every man who would listen to the story of his misfortune. But he never failed to wind up with the oft-repeated clause: "Though the speculation was a bad one, yet it must be confessed that the bridge is perfect."

III

A third cause for Elijah's melancholy may have been due to the reaction following an exaggerated sense of his own importance. In his depression he cried: "O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." Nobody ever hinted that he was. Instead of being better than his fathers, Ahab and Jezebel, and many others in northern Israel, were ready to testify that he was the meanest man alive. Great and useful as he was in God's hand, it is possible that the con-

spicuous part he had played in such a lonely manner, caused Elijah to think that without his intervention the world would go to smash. Yet in that sublime orchestra at Horeb, God reminded him that He had seven thousand in Israel, whose knees had not bowed unto Baal, and whose mouths had not kissed him. It is additional evidence of another large streak of human nature in Elijah. And there are many folk who imagine the clock of the universe would soon run down if they were not here to keep it wound up. Every life has an infinite value, but every life does not have an infinite importance as relating to the conduct of affairs belonging peculiarly to God. God covets our love, but He does not covet our wisdom, which has been defined as foolishness. Yet it is a hard lesson for men to learn. When Shakespeare goes, we forget that he has given birth to a thousand minstrels of song. When the chisel of Phidias is robbed of its cunning, we are too short-sighted to see that the as yet unfashioned hand of Michael Angelo will make it work new miracles in stone. When Titian lays aside his one color, we forget that he has taught countless artists to paint with all the colors of the rainbow. When Mozart goes up in his chariot of song, we forget that he throws his mantle of music across the world. When Gladstone's eyes are closed in death, we forget that from the mountain of his living greatness he sowed continents with the seeds of goodness, and the ages will reap harvests of unborn Gladstones. When Lincoln falls baptized in his own blood, we forget that his crimson fingers anoint a Garfield and a McKinley, a Roosevelt and a Wilson. And when Elijah steps into his vehicle of fire, we forget that its flames shoot into the heart of Elisha, and Hazael, and Jehu, and John the Baptist, and every other man and woman with a divine passion for righteousness. The universe is so finely keyed to harmony that the exit of the world's greatest man cannot create

friction or discord. I once read these words, spoken by one of the greatest among the sons of men, cut upon that tablet in Westminster Abbey: "God buries His workmen, but He carries on His work."

IV

But if the causes of despondency are worth considering, its cure as relating to both Elijah and ourselves may well receive our attention. The first thing God did was to satisfy Elijah's bodily wants. Like a silver blast of music the words of the angel, "Arise and eat," must have fallen upon the prophet's ears. But that which was a cure for Elijah's despondency is ofttimes the cause of our own. While Elijah of necessity ate too little, many of his successors eat too much. Instead of waiting for the angel of the kitchen to waken us from our sleep of despondency by her magic touch, an hour of vigorous physical exercise would answer much better. If you can't build a stone wall, or chop wood, or dig ditches, or turn a grindstone, tunnel a hole through the atmosphere by rapid walking in God's out-of-doors. When a certain husband complained to his wife that it was useless to explain things to a woman because she cannot understand scientific terms, the wife answered: "Indeed, I can! Heredity is what a man blames his father and mother for, and environment is what he blames his wife and children for!" If melancholy, nothing will make a man forget his heredity and enable him to master his environment like physical exercise. Instead of yielding to mental gloom, Dr. Johnson slew his adversary by walking much in the open air. As a result of the opium habit, De Quincey imagined that he had a living hippopotamus in his stomach. He expelled this horrid monster by walking ten miles a day. When it rained, he carried stones from one place to another. If physical

exercise will chase away a hippopotamus, it certainly ought not to be daunted by a case of the blues.

Another thing God did for Elijah was to give him a new and true revelation of Himself. What the prophet needed, and what most people need, is not more religion, but a better conception of God. It has been said that every man paints his own picture of God. If this be true, then by all means let us have a good God—even that compassionate Father revealed in Jesus Christ. Elijah had fed his soul upon a God of terror and omnipotence, without knowing the greatness of His gentleness or the whisper of His love. Elijah's picture of God was painted with an iron brush, dipped in leaden colors. He seemed to think that God's chief delight was in touching off Sinaitic artillery. Little wonder, therefore, that he is down under the juniper tree. No man can worship a God of brass and grow a soul lustrous with spiritual gold. God rolls the thunder, and heaves the earthquake, and kindles the fire, but He is not in them. He rides forth in the chariot of the still small voice, whose wheels spin so gently that the silver is not dashed from a drop of dew, nor the odor crushed from the heart of a violet, nor the song driven from the throat of a bird, nor the faith frightened from the soul of a child. A true revelation of our Father keeps the heart as young and rich as that boy in Riley's song:

> He owns the bird-songs of the hills—
> The laughter of the April rills;
> And his are all the diamonds set
> In morning's dewy coronet,—
> And his the dusk's first minted stars
> That twinkle through the pasture-bars
> And litter all the skies at night
> With glittering scraps of silver light;—
> The rainbow's bar, from rim to rim,
> In beaten gold, belongs to him.

One of the chief causes of much of our modern despondency is the result of reading gloomy, trashy, superficial literature. The depressing pages of Manfred are not conducive to brightness of spirits. What we read becomes a part of us. Like Pascal, all our fogs and fine days are in ourselves. One way to keep out the fogs is to steer clear of books heavy with a melancholy atmosphere, and let fine days break upon the soul by living much in the company of wholesome, optimistic authors. Our thoughts are known by the company they keep. One of the art treasures of the Louvre is the Venus of Milo. Truly the chisel of that old Greek sculptor played a tune in marble! The white brow, the wavy hair, the parted lips, the noble face, are all suggestive of unsung songs and unawakened melodies. The Venus of Milo is in a room by itself, closely guarded. But near by is a glass case, containing fragments of an arm, with a hand and fingers. Now the statue of Venus has neither arms nor feet. But no one ever supposed those fragments in the glass case belonged to the Queen of Beauty. They are unshapely, and it is easy to see that the statue and the fragments were not chiseled by the same sculptor. Well, what are they doing in the same room, and why are these crude, broken fragments kept in a glass case so close to the Venus? Here is our answer: When the immortal statue of Venus was found buried in the soil of Milo, these fragments were discovered in the same grave. "They were found neighboring one another in the earth, and they will be neighbors to the end of time."

And so, if we make the deathless authors, the kings of thought, our royal companions, we shall not only find a panacea for despondency, but we shall become their neighbors in thought and purpose. If love begets love, beauty begets beauty, goodness begets goodness, nobleness begets nobleness, great thinkers beget great

thinking. The fact that those ugly bits of marble are close by one of the peerless sculptures of all time, is simply to say that they, as we, are known by the company they keep!

Finally, one of the best known prescriptions for despondency is the one God wrote in the Garden of Eden —Work! Rich or poor, no man finds happiness in this world, or any other, without work. The most miserable people are the idle people. Christ said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," dignifying labor by His own life. The person who dedicates his life to a noble work is on the highway to earth's greatest joy. And this shall be his song:

The joy is in the doing,
Not the deed that's done;
The swift and glad pursuing,
Not the goal that's won.

The joy is in the seeing,
Not in what we see;
The ecstasy of vision,
Far and clear and free!

The joy is in the singing,
Whether heard or no;
The poet's wild, sweet rapture,
And song's divinest flow!

The joy is in the being—
Joy of life and breath;
Joy of a soul triumphant,
Conqueror of death!

Is there a flaw in the marble?
Sculptor, do your best;
The joy is in the endeavor—
Leave to God the rest!

X

CHRIST'S KINGDOM

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world.—St. John, XVIII. 36.

An old picture represents Frederick the Great, after being repulsed at the Battle of Torgau, seated in a church waiting for the morning. His eyes flash with anxiety, his face wears a careworn look, his head falls pathetically forward, one hand grasps a cane as if it were a sword, while the other rests upon his knee. Studying the painting, this thought seems to express itself in the bearing of the defeated general: "Will the morning never come that I may ride again at the head of my soldiers? Why lingers the night, when only the dawn can help me retrieve my fallen fortunes?" Looking at the picture, and then reading this eighteenth chapter of John's Gospel, I thought of another night—one of the blackest in the history of the world—when a Greater than Frederick the Great must have longed for the morning. It was a night deepened by the agony of Gethsemane, the betrayal of Judas, the denial of Peter, and the running away of the disciples. It was a night in which the Son of God was led away to Annas, and then to Caiaphas, in whose presence He was insulted by a brutal officer. Shortly afterward the morning did come, but alas! it was a morning streaked with night. Jesus was taken to the judgment hall of Pilate, who was aroused from his early morning slumber, to sit in judgment upon the King of the Universe.

And here in Pilate's judgment hall was enacted one of the most dramatic scenes in the annals of time. Here we see a wild mob, spurred on by religious fanaticism, clamoring for the blood of Jesus. Like all mobs, this one presents not only a mass of men bereft of reason, but a striking anomaly as well. The anomaly is this: They would not enter the judgment hall, lest they should be ceremonially defiled, and thereby unfitted for eating the passover; yet these maddened fragments of humanity do not scruple at staining their hands in the blood of the Son of God. What a pathetic reminder it is of the possible degradation of fallen human nature, when driven onward by the demon of fanaticism! Here they are jealously guarding their opportunity of eating the passover, though it was to be eaten from fingers all crimson and dripping with blood. It almost passes belief, and yet it is painfully and tragically true.

Finally, Pilate came out and asked, "What accusation bring ye against this man?" In a tone of supercilious impatience they answer, "If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him unto thee." "Well, then," said Pilate, "take Him and judge Him according to your law." Behold in their answer another anomaly, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." A strange law that! "It is all right for us to abet you in His murder, but it is all wrong for us to put any man to death." Poor old Pilate! However much we may despise his weakness we cannot fail to sympathize with his position. Any man is to be pitied when made the scapegoat of another's crime.

Wrought upon in his perplexity, Pilate entered the judgment hall again and said unto Jesus, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered him, "Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee of Me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee unto Me: what

hast Thou done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now My kingdom is not from hence."

This, then, is our subject, Christ's Kingdom. "My kingdom is not of this world." Many times do we find Christ using the word kingdom in the Gospels; and many times do we discover, also, that it is the largest word in the vocabulary of earth's mighty ones. From the beginning, to be the founder of a kingdom has been the burning desire of ambitious men. This desire colored the dreams of Alexander the Great; it floated in the fancy of Julius Cæsar; it shaped the destiny of Hannibal; it lent power to the tread of Attila; it rolled in splendor before the dazzled vision of Napoleon; like a sleepless siren, it sang in the hearts of Charlemagne, Cromwell, and Louis XIV. To be able to say, "My kingdom," has made men forget to sleep. To realize this haunting desire, men have raised armies, built navies, robbed the people, and sprinkled battlefields with blood. Seated at last upon a throne whose pillars were stained crimson, they discovered that their kingdoms were only bursting bubbles of a day. Looking down the winding aisles of human history, noting here and there a kingdom rising, a kingdom falling, what shall we say but this, "The kingdoms of earth soon pass away!"

If the reflection inclines us to pessimism, the better should we be prepared to fix our thought upon a kingdom that is imperishable. So our text calls us away from a passing glance at kingdoms that are transitory to a kingdom that is eternal. "My kingdom is not of this world," said Jesus. We are here brought face to face with the most stupendous undertaking in the history of mankind. We are introduced to new realms of thought, to new plans of endeavor, to new forces of

activity, to new purposes in the career of men, to a kingdom different from all others, to a Kingdom-builder standing unique and solitary in the life of the race. What, then, is the nature of Christ's kingdom?

I

First and foremost, Christ's kingdom is spiritual. It does not owe its origin to this earth. It is of supernatural beginning, unworldly in its nature, unearthly in its character, heavenly in its purpose and blessing. Being such, it is universal in its sweep, independent of national and political boundaries, gathering all peoples within its outlying dominions. Indeed, when we try to probe Christ's thought of His kingdom, we are amazed at its vast proportions. Truly His was the master mind of the ages. Only a brain of infinite capacity could have borne the strain of such thoughts as His. Though never crossing the boundary line separating Palestine from the great kingdoms of the world, He is wiser than their philosophers, more cosmopolitan than their greatest citizens, and more profound than their thinkers. He rises superior to all local prejudices, to all racial distinctions, including in His mighty scheme the utmost peoples of the world. What words are these: "They shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham." "The field is the world." "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." Is there not a planetlike majesty in the sweep of this language? Is there not back of it all a plan of universal scope and power? Does there not breathe through it an atmosphere blown off the shores of eternity? Who is this Being pouring immensity into His speech, and asking ages for the fruition of His purposes? Does not the pale, wasted, weary Man in Pilate's judgment hall suddenly tower

into the dimensions of the everlasting God when He says, "My kingdom is not of this world?"

Moreover, the spirituality of Christ's kingdom is emphasized in this—the standards of greatness and blessing and wisdom are all reversed. What was "jesting Pilate's" conception of greatness? Naturally, it was the greatness of Rome; and Rome was the pacemaker in that wild race for worldly greatness, which has destroyed nations and snapped the heartstrings of men. It was a greatness built upon the empire of force. Imagine, therefore, the expression of pity which mantled Pilate's cheek, when this lonely Prisoner at his bar said: "Your standard of greatness is false. Your kingdoms rest upon wrong foundations. You have never grasped the meaning of true greatness. In My kingdom, which shall live on after all other kingdoms have passed, the standard of greatness is humility and service. Here is this little child. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little one, the same is greatest in My kingdom. Here is a man who gives himself in service to his fellow men. According to your code, he is only a human tool. But I say unto you that in My kingdom the greatest of all is the servant of all. Your standard of blessing is also wrong. You say blessed are those who sit in the seats of the mighty, who are proud in spirit, who never wear the garments of mourning, who hold that meekness is only a despicable form of weakness. But in My kingdom blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are they that mourn, blessed are the meek. Again, your wisdom is but foolishness. What is your philosophy when the death angel calls for the soul? What is your natural mind without spiritual illumination? All your intellectual brilliance, when tried by the weightier issues of life and destiny, is as the flickering flame of a glowworm flying in the face of yonder sun. O Pilate, build your palaces, drill your armies, polish your philosophy,

garner your wisdom; but, thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" Understanding how radical is the revolution Jesus wrought in the standards of greatness and blessing and wisdom, we then grasp the significance of the teaching of our text, "My kingdom is not of this world."

II

Consider, also, that Christ's kingdom is a kingdom of growth. Growth is the law of life. Failure to grow is the forerunner of death. When men stop growing, it is only another way of saying that they have sent for the undertaker. So growth is one of the laws of Christ's kingdom. Beginning in the heart of the individual, such is the genius of its spiritual and ethical power, that it soon reaches the life of the commonwealth. Christ's own illustration of this truth is the grain of mustard seed. It is the smallest of all seeds. Lifeless, it is buried in the earth. The raindrops patter upon its tiny tomb. The winds whisper above its grave. Directly the sunbeams, like resurrection angels, blow their golden trumpet of life, and lo! the little corpse stands upon its invisible feet, pushing its way up through the green sod. Already the mystery, the wonder of growth has begun. After awhile a delicate sprig comes forth to greet the morning sun; a little bud unrolls for morning dews to wash its face. Responding to the prayers of sun and shower, the tender plant grows into the greatest of herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. So is it with Christ's kingdom. The Holy Spirit drops a germ of truth into a man's heart. He discovers a strange power at work in his nature. Ask him to explain it, and he tells you that he could as easily "talk down the sun, and speak through all the

shining of the stars." Nor does he have any desire to explain it. It is enough for him to know that old things are passing away, and all things are becoming new. He doesn't know much about the great principles of this new kingdom into which he has come. It is enough for him to rest in the glad consciousness that he has been born again, that his sins are forgiven, that he is justified by faith, and that henceforth he is a citizen of two worlds. But I should pity him if he were content to stop here. He would be unworthy of the privileges which are his. Sad indeed for him did he never hear the song of the angel of growth! God calls us away from our spiritual childhood, even as He does from the days of our mental and physical childhood. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things"—this is the law of spiritual growth in Christ's kingdom. Therefore, let us lay a firm and steady hold upon those first principles of the doctrine of Christ, but upon our peril of becoming spiritual mummies, let us not substitute those principles for spiritual unfoldment. Yet it is to be feared many are doing this identical thing. We all know people who pride themselves on being doctrinal experts. Right glibly they run over the passages covering repentance, baptism, faith, resurrection, and judgment; and these they ought to know, but the end for which these exist should not be unknown in their spiritual consciousness.

And because it is a kingdom of growth, Christ's kingdom holds the genius of the universe itself. Growth is the history of Moses, whining in his ark of bulrushes, and of Moses, shaping the constitutions and governments of the world. Growth explains how Saul, his hands red with human blood, becomes the sun-crowned Paul, the spiritual giant of the ages. Growth spans the distance between the boy Shakespeare shooting

marbles, and the man Shakespeare carrying earth's biggest brain. Growth tells how the boy Titian, staining the wall with the juice of flowers, will after awhile stain the canvas with immortal colors. Growth reveals the story of Newton rocked in his mother's arms, and of Newton rocking suns and planets with the lever of his mind. Growth shows us Lincoln, spelling out words by the light of a pine-knot in the Kentucky cabin, and Lincoln pronouncing one of the masterpieces of all eloquence at Gettysburg.

Indeed, it is because of our ever-widening conceptions of the law of growth, that our scientists have had to rewrite their textbooks explaining the physical universe. If once men thought stars and suns were flung into space as so many sparks from the anvil of omnipotence, now we are told that uncounted cycles were occupied in their growing. Geologists trace the mountain peak back to the grain of mica, that asked for eons in which to thrust its jagged summit through the clouds. And if this law is supreme in things physical, it is equally so in Christ's kingdom. Peter could have closed his second epistle with no profounder exhortation than this: "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Because it is a kingdom of growth, Christ looked forward to the day when His kingdom should include all kingdoms, tongues, and races. In His great vision, He beheld earth itself swinging into a new, renovated, redeemed planet; when the City of the New Jerusalem, that ideal social commonwealth, should descend out of Heaven from God as a bride adorned for her husband. What a message was this delivered in Pilate's hall, "My kingdom is not of this world!"

III

Consider, finally, that because Christ's kingdom is not of this world, it is a kingdom of peace. No king-

dom of earthly fashioning has ever yet had peace for its motto. Search your histories, search your philosophies, and you will find it not. Yet Paul tells us that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." How wonderful it is! This Prisoner founding upon the ruins of the kingdoms of war, of ambition, of avarice, a kingdom of peace. Like a song of sweetest music from out the opening heavens come these words: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." Our Lord calls us to diviner atmospheres than can be found on this low-lying earth. Ascending the dome of St. Peter's, as one climbs the spiral staircase, he sees in the walls memorial-tablets of royal personages who have made the ascent. On gaining the roof, a number of smaller domes greet the eye. Here on the roof, also, are dwellings, in which the custodians and workmen of the great church live. I like to think of them working down here, but living up there. At night, when the day's work is done, they leave the earth behind and climb to rest in peace beneath the tranquil beauty of the skies. So God has put us in the world to do our day's work, and as we work, to be conscious of the gladdening music of this upper kingdom of peace. When our day's work is done, and the evening shadows gather, we shall lie down, like the caretakers of the great cathedral, to rest in peace beneath the gentle calm of heaven's stars!

But it was after reaching the summit of the great dome of St. Peter's, as the Roman Campania unrolled in billows of living green, that my mind went even farther back than the first century of the Christian era. I thought of Rome in the height of her power, when she had a Virgil to sing her glory, and a Horace to celebrate her victories, and a Cicero to publish her eloquence, and a Cæsar to mold her plans of state, and a

Pompey to lead her armies. I thought of her forum, her Pantheon, her palaces, and her gladiatorial shows. I thought of her wealth, her splendor, her sin, her shame. Looking beyond the great wall, in fancy I could see a mighty army coming with victorious shouts from fields of foreign conquest. I thought of how tribute nations poured their wealth in a golden river into the lap of the mistress of the world. And yet there was not in all this panorama a single suggestion of peace!

Turning toward the South, my thought leaped across the Mediterranean, reaching Jerusalem, and then Pilate's judgment hall. Here stands the Great Galilean face to face with the iron-hearted Roman. The Roman is stern in his bearing, harsh in his speech, an impatient frown clouds his brow. He seems to be saying: "What have I to do with this wild dreamer? I have no time to waste upon this spinner of fanciful theories! He says he's a king. Bah! There are no kings outside of Rome!" Calmly Jesus answers: "I am the king of truth. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice." "The king of truth!" rejoins Pilate. "What is truth?" And he turns impatiently away.

So the centuries have come and gone since that early morning episode in Jerusalem. But the centuries cannot block the progress of Christ's kingdom. Before it, all other kingdoms must give way. As the old and false kingdoms pass, and the new and true kingdom comes, we realize that the principles of this divine kingdom of peace are bringing fulfillment to the dream of Victor Hugo: "The diminution of the men of war, of violence, of prey; the indefinite and superb expansion of the men of thought and peace; the entrance of the real giants upon the scene of action; this is one of the greatest facts of our great era. There is no more sub-

lime and pathetic spectacle—mankind's deliverance from above, the potentates put to flight by the dreamers, the prophet crushing the hero, the sweeping away of violence by thought, the heaven cleansed, a majestic expulsion! The masters are going out, the liberators are coming in. The hunters of men, the trailers of armies, Nimrod, Sennacherib, Cyrus, Rameses, Xerxes, Cambyses, Attila, Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, Alexander, Cæsar, Bonaparte—all these vast, ferocious men are vanishing.

"While smitten with the fatal wanness of approaching doom, the flamboyant pleiad of the men of violence descends the steep slope to the gulf of devouring time; lo! at the other extremity of space, where the last cloud has but now faded, in the deep sky of the future, azure forevermore, rises, resplendent, the sacred galaxy of the true stars; and the marvelous constellation, brighter from moment to moment, radiant as a tiara of celestial diamonds, shines in the clear horizon, and, as it rises, blends with the boundless dawn of Jesus Christ."

Captains and conquerors leave a little dust,
And kings a dubious legend of their reign;
The swords of Cæsar, they are less than rust;
Christ's Kingdom doth remain.

XI

THE HEAVEN OPENED

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye shall see the Heaven opened.—St. John i. 51.
And I saw the Heaven opened.—Rev. xix. 11.

There are some Scriptures that inevitably set themselves together. These two passages are of this quality. Very different indeed are their settings, speakers, and persons to whom spoken. And yet a certain, deep, meaningful unity lives at their inmost being. Nathanael was under his fig-tree when Jesus, impressed by his guilelessness and receptivity, said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye shall see the Heaven opened." On the other hand, St. John was on his mystery-haunted isle when he confessed: "And I saw the Heaven opened." Far apart, yet Heaven was near to each. Widely separated both by temperament and experience, yet Heaven came to see them where they were.

The truth I wish to impress upon us at the opening of our church year is: The Heaven is always open and opening to souls voyaging on heavenly seas. I do not mean by this that those seas are far away, so big with the inrolling tides of unreality and foamy hearsay that they are quite foreign to our human nature; rather, that these seas are close at hand, welling up from the deeps of Nature and of God, breaking upon the shores of our own lives, bringing immortal values right up to our own doorsteps. All we have to do—and it is very much indeed—is to reach out and unload

the cargoes of beauty and love and goodness piled high upon our own immediate harbors.

I

Consider that the Heaven opens at the Spring of the year. This ever-recurring miracle of the seasons is a challenging one indeed. Each carries its own peculiar lessons, but it is probable that Spring appeals most strongly to the majority of people. This may be due to the fact that Spring is the infant of the year; it is Nature's birth-period; it is the time when things are about to be born; it is the time when everything is fresh and young and tender—it is then that this little child of the seasons comes blossoming and singing across the world. Now humanity has never wearied of the little child. We grow tired of grown-ups—they somehow manage to become so stale and flat and unprofitable; but that specimen of humankind named a little child crosses our pathway like a sweet-scented wind from the Hills of Paradise. Instantly, at his approach, the unslain child within us stirs for a moment. Heaven once again lies about us in our new-found infancy, as we behold the wonder of his white innocence and vernal greenness. Thus, I say, Spring is the little child of the seasons, while Summer is their lusty youth, Autumn their ripe maturity, and Winter their hoary head.

Well, suppose that you had never seen a Spring unfold its million-tinted loveliness and charm. Suppose that you were standing some bleak day on the frozen edge of a winter-locked world. Then suppose that the Invisible Master should suddenly stand by your side, and, pointing across the waste of desolation, quietly whisper: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye shall see the Heaven opened." "But how, Master, and when?" you would inquire. And lo! even while you were

framing your question, there within that desolation, something too wonderful for feet and wings would be moving with immeasureable majesty and power; a nameless quickening would even then be running through the soul of the world. Should you watch long enough, Spring would open before your very eyes her enchanting feast of wonders—little green buds, young twinkling leaves, velvet spears of grass, choirs of warbling birds. And then, you, too, being in the Spirit on the Lord's day, like John on his sea-girt isle —would you not exclaim: "And I saw the Heaven opened"?

Yet is there something more wonderful, my friends, than the Heaven that opens at the Spring of the year? It is this: The opening of the soul, the growth of character into a deepening Christlikeness. After we have gotten beyond the mere pagan interpretation of the seasons, is not this unfolding of the soul into the image of its Master the one secret of the finer understanding and enjoyment of Nature and the universe itself? I think that is a beautifully true and Christian note struck by Temple Scott. "The secret of life," he says, "lies not so much in being as it does in becoming; in growing by ever-new expressions of the many-sided meaning of being." And has not the same thought been immortally expressed by our Master: "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear"? Yet the figure of the full corn in the ear does not wholly exhaust the truth of the soul's growth. To be almost crassly literal, we can easily imagine the perfection of an ear of corn; indeed, I think I have seen with my own eyes absolutely perfect ears of corn at that wonder-teeming Heart's Delight Farm yonder on the shores of Lake Champlain. Yet souls as they are—the fairest, richest, and most achieving among them—never impress us as having reached the limits of their capacity. Why, the wonder of the soul is the pro-

foundest wonder within the worlds. That is why Jesus is incomparably unique. It is enough for lesser men to be masters of physical forces and marching melodies and glowing colors; but Jesus is the transcendent Master of Souls—the Lord of the stuff of Godhead, the Finisher of that which shall still remain unfinished when the world is folded up like a garment and laid away in the wardrobe of Eternity. What a mighty and unspeakable thing it is to be a soul! For a soul that has only come within hailing distance of its ultimate soulhood, is as much superior to the solar system as a four-leaf clover is to a rock.

So, on this opening day, I want us to take a step forward, not backward—inward, heavenward, to the soul's unfolding Springtime. It is not what you are, but what you may be—that is the truth I want you to face like spiritually upstanding men and women. The Lord have mercy upon us if we have reached the point when we are too impotent to be spiritual strivers! One of our greatest preachers tells of two men. The first is a man who refuses to have vital, social and political subjects discussed in his concern, because society, as he avers, is already ninety-eight per cent right. The other is a man who, on his return from war-wracked Europe, was asked what was the most impressive thing he found in America. He answered: "Our appalling self-righteousness." Think of it! Society, with its rottenness, injustice, lawlessness, and political turpitude, and yet—ninety-eight per cent right! Think of it! America, stalking among the starving nations of the earth, a sleek, well-fed, international pharisee, flaunting her vulgar robes of self-interest, and America, too, mark you, ninety-eight per cent right! Our appalling self-righteousness is a deadly menace, but just forget it all! Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. Let us fiddle away while the world burns and starves and

glibly justify our unctuous selves by asserting: "It is none of our business!" Or, as one grave Senator remarks, if the League of Nations would only change its name, then perhaps America would go in! Surely, brethren, our feeling of being ninety-eight per cent right and toting our appalling load of self-righteousness all at the same time—surely this international rose would smell as sweet by any other name!

Well, if American stupidity goes on apace, and this terrible rose keeps on unfolding, we shall be very glad one of these days to have a whiff of its fragrance come our way. For there is One Who judges in righteousness, and not by tradition or hearsay. And His words are just as applicable to nations as they are to individuals. Was it not in the hour of their appalling self-righteousness that Jesus said to those petrified pharisees of old—"the chief priests and elders of the people"—"Verily, I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you"? Whenever a people or an individual are overtaken by the palsy of self-righteousness, the undertaker is already at the door and they are too dead to hear his knock. Whenever, on the other hand, a people or an individual, have faith to work and believe that God's everlasting Springtime is on the way to meet them, they are the puissant folk whose feet are already marching up "the green roads of the Never-Old." Oh, America!—oh, men and women of America!—is not every day doomsday, and are we not as sheep and goats that go to the right or the left every nightfall?

> Eternities went by in flight
> And yet you rose not into light.
> The first stars showered upon the Void
> And young heavens rose and were destroyed;
> And still you did not rise to be,
> Your bubble did not break the sea.

But now that you have heard the Voice
And risen to the world of choice,
Now that the stars look down on you,
What is the work that you will do—
What lofty life, what valiant deed
Ashine with splendor and with speed?
Do something, brother, to befit
An offspring of the Infinite!

Whenever nations and individuals do something to justify their heavenly offspring, by the very consciousness of duty well done, do they not take upon the lips of their being the words of the seer, "And I saw the Heaven opened"?

II

Furthermore, Heaven opens at every sunrise and sunset. These two natural splendors, it seems to me, can never lose their glory for perceiving minds. Themes over which poets, painters, musicians, and orators linger the generations through, must burn with some vast, undying spiritual fire at their heart. So, morning and evening, from Homer right on down through William Blake and Joseph Blanco White to Francis Thompson, as well as to the last singer just rising from his nest of poesy, have ever signaled to responsive souls with their many-barred flags of beauty. Did you look up last evening and see the west catch fire and burn with such divine rage that it was long before the fire department of night could extinguish its molten fury? Having no language of my own to tell you about it, I am proud to borrow these lustrous verbal coins from that hermit-thrushlike soul, Emily Dickinson. Not unjustly, I think, her "Sea of Sunset" has been pronounced one of the finest pieces of word-color painting in all literature:

This is the land the sunset washes;
These are the banks of the Yellow Sea:
Where it rose or whither it rushes,
These are the western mystery.

Night after night her purple traffic
Strews the landing with opal bales:
Merchantmen poise upon horizons,
Dip, and vanish with fairy sails.

Well, this was the very land washed by seas of sunset last evening. Did you pause, look up, and see the Heaven open? Or did you buy a ticket to some tinsel affair, where daubs and gauds held forth in a riot of squalor and ugliness? It is a true word, my friends, that Heaven alone is given away. We have to pay high prices for hideously cheap things, but the very best of all is thrust upon us without money and without price. Yes; I saw the day die and its broken heart emptied rivers of beauty over the face of the west, while great rills of color even flowed around the enchanted countenance of the east as it lay bathed in the tender afterglow. But I saw more than the dying day. This being Sunday, I gave the alarm-clock a vacation. There are days in the week when I may require his services; but never on Sundays! If I was not up with the lark, I was at least awake with him. That is how I saw the morning break. My first impression was, as I sailed forth from the wonderlands of sleep, that the sunset of yesterday had forgotten to fade. I rather deamily surmised that he was so proud of himself that he had just switched around to the east as if to say: "I was only half trying over there in the west last night. Behold me now!" Then it dawned upon me that our little earth had taken a swing around the great sun, and there he was—magnificent, purple-robed, one of "God's ancient beautiful things," and yet young with the scraps and litterings

of Godhead—winking his light-giving eyes at me! Pray, who could stay abed with a guest like that peering into his chamber? Then and there I got up, half shouting the fulfillment of the Master's promise: "And I saw the Heaven opened."

Significant in themselves, is there not a mystic comradeship, a kind of human fellow-feeling in the sunrise and the sunset? As I look at sun and moon and stars, I rejoice in saying to myself: "That is the very sun that Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, and David saw. That is the same moon that Sappho and Shakespeare and Dante and Milton beheld. Those are the same stars that Galileo and Copernicus and Herschel and Newcomb studied." And did not all look at them with different eyes, because, as one star differeth from another star in glory, so each soul is so different from every other soul, that it sees a different aspect of the universe. Then what's the use of our quarreling because we do not see the same thing? Let us be too busy seeing our own portion of loveliness and terror to indulge in such childish tantrums.

And yet, I am perfectly sure that there is something more wonderful than the light of rising and setting suns. It is the light of love that shines through the human eye. At no point in Nature does the splendor of Godhead beam so luminously—at no point do such awful and glorious spiritual backgrounds expose themselves—as in the love-lit human eye. The other afternoon I went into the home of one of God's majestic lowly. There was not a single evidence of pomp and pride and luxury. The toiling hands of a woman stood between several children and dire want. Yet I found bubbling springs of happiness there; I found the river of thanksgiving flowing full and free. "Oh, but you must see the baby before you go!" exclaimed the happy, heroic mother. Did I see the baby? Verily, I did—and the blessed mother held the little one close

against her blessed heart! Her face shone like some flesh-and-blood Madonna. I looked at the humble home, the children glad that a stranger had come in, and again at that mother's radiant face. And—and—what? Yes, I will say it before God and men: "And I saw the Heaven opened."

Yesterday afternoon, in very different surroundings indeed, I saw the selfsame miracle repeated. Ancestry, culture, wealth—all these were in the mansion. But something more, thank God! There in the palace a finely-tuned woman-soul was in league with the same old enchantment of mother-love that I had seen in the cottage. As one by one the outer props of life have fallen away, she has felt her path more surely and deeply into that Bosom enfolded by the Everlasting Arms. Oh, what a light is that that kindles in the human eye when Love—sacrificial, pure, sweet, and undefiled—walks forth from the mighty deeps of being and sits enthroned in the very windows of the soul! These are they who know how to lay the world away in more than stately pomp and splendid ritual; they simply retire far back into those precincts of the spiritual, whence their souls are constantly rejuvenated by the bubbling fountains of Christ's good grace, and then walk forth to meet every challenge flung at them by good or ill, knowing that—

> All around him Patmos lies,
> Who sees with spirit-gifted eyes.

Standing fortunately near one of these only recently, again I had to say: "And I saw the Heaven opened."

Then, also, here is this letter from a triumphant sufferer. "The orchestra that has encamped on my breast for the Winter," it runs, "has gradually shortened its programs, as I have gradually overcome an old standing debt of fatigue." And then, watching a loved

one slip away, in deeper strain: "These sunset days are very precious to us all and hold the tenderest memories. We cling so to this little Mother, and want her, even with all the difficulties this burning pain has brought." Frankly, is there any light, except that Light in which we shall see light, like this love-light raying out of the human heart? Somehow, I feel that it is the Light that tells what all the sunrises and sunsets have striven to say so long and never quite succeeded. At last we are thrown back upon that lofty word of the apostle: "Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, Who shined in our hearts, to give light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And when these inner skies begin to burn, does not John's experience become our own as we say: "And I, too, Lord of the high heart and clean soul, saw the Heaven opened"?

II

Moreover, Heaven opens in the grandeur of the mountains. The Bible is full of the awe and peace of the great hills. "I will look unto the mountains, whence cometh my help"; "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from this time forth and forevermore"—these are two waves in that rolling river of psalmodic melody. For faith, the mountains are mighty monuments of inspiration; they are ageless symbols of God's care for the souls of men. And all their grandeur is built up little by little, mica flake by mica flake, from the depths of vanished seas, as if to chant the patience and timelessness of God. So the Psalmist sets the eternity of God over against the sculpture of these vast shoulders and peaks jutting up from the depths of the earth. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from

everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." In the presence of such sublimely uplifting thoughts, is not one like a little child undertaking to journey from continent to continent, from world to world, from constellation to constellation? Should he meet you on his pilgrim ways and ask, "How far is it, Mr. Man, from Chicago to Calcutta, from Calcutta to Centaurus?" would you not be strangely embarrassed? Well, here is a longer, harder, more bewildering question: *"How far is it from everlasting to everlasting?"* Don't know? Very well, then, there is hope for you and me, my friend, because "before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God."

Lately, I have been watching the stones cast up by antique glacial rivers. They are as round and smooth, as perfectly sculptured and shaped as any ball bearing made by the modern engineer. Looking at them, I thought they were easily adequate to the task of carrying the molten earth as it rolled along in its white-hot fury, millions and millions of ages ago. I saw a mountain lad standing upon one of these huge boulders. I could not help contrasting their ages. With his sun-colored face and laughing eyes, he looked, in comparison with the stone he was standing on, about as old as a dewdrop on the faded cheek of old Babylon. And yet Babylon, Nineveh, Tyre—yea, caveman, firemist, mountain—all are as a watch in the night set over against the everlastingness of the Ancient of Days! I came down out of the mountains wondering if that morning-kissed boy did not, comparatively also, symbolize the youth of our humanity. I grant you that we are old enough in wickedness and ignorance and meanness; and yet—and yet—when I think of the age of the mountains and of the everlastingness of God, of His wisdom and love and sacrifice and purpose, I

seem to see the race itself as a kind of April-boy, ready to start upon a wondrous journey through green Summers and ripening Autumns yet to be.

But however one may be thrilled and exalted by the grandeur of the mountains, there is something grander by far. It is the Heaven that opens in the conquering grandeur of the human spirit. Moving into this larger realm of ampler airs and meanings, are we not challenged by the greatness of things that differ? "The atmosphere of moral sentiment is a region of grandeur," says a discriminating thinker, "which reduces all material magnificence to toys, yet opens to every wretch that has reason the doors of the universe." Going up into the atmosphere of moral sentiment is more bracing than even the atmosphere of the mountains.

Look at John the Baptist in his dungeon and Herod in his gilded squalor. Look at Edith Cavell, waiting for the dawn and death, and those vile assassins that dyed their souls with blacker stains. Look at these butchering Turks, aided and abetted by French, Italian, English, and American politicians, and those charred and mutilated bodies amid the ruins of Smyrna. Look at all these raging hells that man has kindled, and does it make no difference to God? I tell you the living God is abroad even now; He cannot be missed a hair's-breadth from the judgments we have earned and are earning. Yet mightier than the horror of smoking cities is the moral majesty which lightens the soul walking amid all of earth's crumbling ruins. Say to your soul that it is well with John the Baptist and ill with Herod; that it is well with Edith Cavell and ill with von Bissing; that it is well with the martyrs of Smyrna and ill with the unspeakable Turk; say it because we live in a spiritually fireproof universe. The God Who clothes the human spirit with majesty is the very God Who decrees "a gravitation of spirits,"

and each goes to his own place of doom or bloom. There is no conceivable escape.

Oh, yes, I have seen men wrestle with the mountains and throw them down in heaps of dust! Do we not sing—

A man went down to Panama,
Where many a man had died,
To slit the sliding mountains,
And lift the eternal tide.
A man stood up in Panama,
And the mountains stood aside.

But there are more stubborn mountains than those wrought of dirt and stone. They are the invisible moral mountains every soul must climb. Behold these moral-mountain climbers, and answer me if there is any clean, snow-white, toppling grandeur like it in the wide, wide world! I think of those gray-bearded Adirondacks and the thrill of peace their cooling heights have sent into the hearts of unnumbered thousands. But I remember Edward Livingstone Tardieu, dragging his dying body up into those hills and down again, that he might teach mankind how to fight the white plague even as he fought his own long-drawn-out death-battle. Why, the mountains must have stood up a little higher in holy pride when this "good physician" and greatly achieving human child lay down at last to sleep within their enfolding arms! This newly-published letter of Robert Louis Stevenson, written when he was twenty-three, reminds us that he, too, sought those same mountains and the help of Dr. Tardieu. "I recognize," the letter reads, "that I shall never be a great man. I may set myself peacefully on a smaller journey, not without hope of coming to the inn before nightfall." Oh, good, brave, sunny-hearted man! Not often do we have the courage to contradict you. But when we remember what a valiant and fair fighter you were, sending out hope and romance

and cheer from your death-wasting body, we are constrained to say that you are at once great and good and beautiful! Disease might fall upon you and crush your house of clay; but a grandeur higher than the mountains was on your unconquerable soul, which could not be crushed by a falling universe! Ours is a world in which, from bows of golden disasters, fly the divine arrows that are tipped with healing balm. Listen to the voice of Lieutenant Robert F. Scott, after the winds have stung him, and the snows have blinded him, and the ice-fields have frozen him: *"The soul of man is stronger than anything that can happen to him!"* Methinks that death-shout, amid the loneliness and terror of the antarctic night, must have sent a fragrance like June flowers throughout its sunless zone! And what shall we say of Sir Arthur Pearson, giving lessons on "learning to be blind"? Having lost his own sight, he set himself the task of learning to be blind; and having learned how himself, he has marvelously taught those blinded soldiers at St. Dunstan's how to go through life sightless, but happy and useful servants. He tells of one blind soldier who has a genius for organizing work in the offices of the National Institute for the Blind. This man, though blind, feeds himself, and, though eyeless and handless, operates a typewriter through the special devices prepared for him. Truly, when a human being gets his back against the wall, and is at the same time the gathering-ground of spiritual forces, the very wall itself seems to move in upon him and push him forward to the conquest of every foe in his pathway. "The more my life disappointed me," said Ruskin, "the more solemn and wonderful it became." Herein is the grandeur that excels; at its compelling touch Heaven is opened on every side and the soul goes through all of its opened gates at once. That is why these lines are not so eloquent as their truth:

Defeat may serve as well as victory
To shake the soul and let the glory out.
When the great oak is straining in the wind,
The boughs drink in new beauty and the trunk
Sends down a deeper root on the windward side.
Only the soul that knows the mighty grief
Can know the mighty rapture. Sorrows come
To stretch out spaces in the heart for joy.

IV

Mark, finally, that Heaven opens in the fragrance of fields, woods, and gardens. Is it possible that you and I are going through these mysterious seasons and nature-plots and missing the melodies and overtures of Heaven all around us? If you have seen no opening Heaven in a blooming garden, a field of corn leaning sunward in late August, or the nun-like stillness of whispering woods, for the life of me I cannot understand how gates of pearl, walls of jasper, or streets of gold can ever attract you. There are tomes of unfathomable theology in a garden, for—

A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot!
Rose plot,
Fringed pool,
Ferned grot—
The veriest school
Of peace; and yet the fool
Contends that God is not—
Not God! in gardens! when the eve is cool?
Nay, but I have a sign;
'Tis very sure God walks in mine.

And have the speechful glooms of overarching woods no word for us? Right well do I know a spot named Cathedral Woods! Winding through them, one seems to be treading about in green cloistered aisles of articulate quietude. One afternoon as I walked through

them a soft rain came pattering musically down upon the receptive leaves. Yonder in that bit of cleared space is a platform, while all around are improvised seats for worshipers. There Dr. Gunsaulus once stood and preached one of his greatest sermons. The afternoon I walked through, there "were presences plain in the place" and a more than woodland fragrance breathed through it all. And why? Because the fragrance of a fragrant soul is the finest incense rising from the altars of earth to the throne of God. Passing our way, do they not open the Heaven for us, while the angels of God continue their unbroken processional of ascending and descending upon the Christ-redeemed earth?

One of the great names of science is that of Charles Darwin; one of the great names of service is that of Thomas Bridges; and these two have been linked together in a memorable way. Touring the world in 1832, Darwin stopped at Tierre Del Fuego, an archipelago south of the southern end of South America. So low and besotted were the savage peoples infesting those wilds that the English Admiralty did not permit ships to land there. Darwin says that they were so vile in their practices as to be beyond any civilizing influence whatsoever. The great naturalist dared not set down in black and white what his own eyes beheld with horror and amazement. Yet over against this terrible fact God has set one of His unimpeachable realities. One day a babe was picked up in the streets of Bristol. For all that men knew, the child had neither father or mother—just a little cast-off Melchizedek, without beginning or ending of days, so far as the world was concerned. Well, being found between two bridges, he was named Bridges; and the day on which he was found being St. Thomas' day, he was named Thomas. So he and history came by the name of Thomas Bridges. The foundling grew to manhood;

becoming a missionary, he asked for a field; the missionary society looked over the map and found that there was one place no missionary would go. It was the archipelago of Tierre Del Fuego, the place inhabited by the squalid people seen by young Charles Darwin. Thomas Bridges went among them, lived with them, created a language for them, translated the Bible for them, told the story of God's love in Christ for them. When Charles Darwin, now a much older man, heard the story, he publicly acknowledged his mistake and made a contribution toward the work of missions.

Did not the Lord Christ verify His promise, and did not Thomas Bridges and those poor, benighted people see the Heaven opened? Yea, verily! I tell you the most skillful angel could not make a lock that would keep the gates of Heaven shut fast when the Spirit of the living God possesses the souls of men and women. These mystic gates automatically and irresistibly unbar, while angels troop in and out, sweetly burdened with the Bread of God for toilers in the upbuilding of the new heavens, wherein dwelleth righteousness, right here on the earth. Ah, men and women, that is a greatly modern word which has come down to us out of the ancient years; it is soft with the dews of unspoiled Edens and pregnant with the wonders of eternal life. "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not too hard for thee, neither is it far off. It is not in Heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to Heaven, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." So do the old seer and the new singer spill their various musics

out, and lo! it is the one Christian melody "whose music is the gladness of the world!"

I made a pilgrimage to find the Lord:
I listened for His voice at holy tombs,
Searched for the print of His immortal feet
In dust of broken altars; yet turned back
With empty heart. But on the homeward road,
A great light came upon me, and I heard
The Lord's voice singing in a nesting lark;
Felt His sweet wonder in a swaying rose:
Received His blessing from a wayside well;
Looked on His beauty in a lover's face;
Saw His bright hand send signal from the sun.

XII

A GREAT WOMAN*

We are gathered here this afternoon, my friends, to honor ourselves as well as the good woman who has gone from us. In commemorating beautiful souls, we exercise the finest side of our natures; so do human beings honor themselves in honoring their vanished comrades of the great invisible fellowship. By every canon of judgment and good taste, this should be a Christian service. Pagan rites or pagan thoughts have no place in this presence. Therefore, we desire to make our service one of commemoration, consolation, and inspiration. For it is an hour in which to remember that we are, supremely, souls; that in comparison with our soulhood, and the elements which enter into the making of true souls, everything else is secondary. We sometimes forget this fact. In a world of overwhelming noises the deeper voices of life are frequently lost in silence. Busy here and there, we fail to recall that, after all, the high business of men and women is nothing less than the growing of Christian character. So, when one of these high-minded characters go the way of the unreturning, we are solemnly admonished that it is soul, and soul alone, that counts. And, surely, we have had many admonitions since I became your minister. To mention only a few, I think of our beloved leader, Dr. Gunsaulus, Mr. John Field, Mr. A. C. Bartlett, Mr. R. W. Cox; of

* An address at the funeral service of Mrs. B. E. Sunny, December 29, 1922.

Mrs. Phelps, Mrs. Eddy, Mrs. Cook, Miss Emma Smith, and now of our friend and fellow-worker, Mrs. Sunny, who has joined

> The choir invisible
> Of those immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence.

In thinking of Mrs. Sunny, my mind reverts to that beautiful old story recorded in the Second Book of the Kings. "And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread." "A great woman"—her constraining and nourishing genius—that sums up, in a phrase, the character of our friend. Is it not at once our privilege and duty to interpret greatness in the light of our Lord and Master? The familiar and conventional conception of greatness has to do with certain pronounced intellectual capacities and gifts, inherited and developed. It may even measure itself, as well as the universe, in terms of bulk, quantity, possessions. But Christ has forever doomed and rendered obsolete that mistaken conception of greatness. The centuries, I doubt not, shall ultimately cast it into the limbo of outworn and forgotten things. Meantime the larger and Christian and waxing conception of greatness is a matter of quality, of spirit, of service, of altruism. It is in the glow of this wiser, profounder light shed upon the idea of greatness that we would think of our friend. Any genuine appraisal and appreciation of her must include both the retrospective and prospective—the past and future tenses of her being.

I

First of all, Mrs. Sunny was great in her wifehood. One of the unique features of Christian wifehood is

this: Nobody understands how great and good and beautiful a true wife is except the man who loves her. Within and beyond any conception held by anybody else, the husband alone understands those dear and sacred and sacrificial features of his companion which cannot be disclosed to any other human being. The world may have one conception, the circle of friends another, while even the relatives and immediate household have still another; but to the man who walks by her side, who shares her joys and sorrows, her hopes and aspirations—he and he alone carries in his heart an understanding and appreciation of his wife, which is lovely in its uniqueness and apart in its fruitful memories.

Thus, as we have seen this wife, may we not say, without cant or misgiving, that in the light of the larger and truer significance which our Master imported into the idea of greatness, here was a great woman—great in her wise and loyal and holy wifehood. For a full generation or more, this husband and father has walked the ways of love and companionship with her; oft indeed has he passed by in going to and fro about the business of living; through more than forty years he has turned in to eat the bread of hope and cheer and patience and inspiration, tenderly wrought by these diligent, folded hands. He knows her beauty and worth, as you and I, nor anyone else, can possibly know.

Moreover, our friend was great in her motherhood. Someone has said that the greatest thing in the universe, and next to God, is to be a mother. So we come to another approach, a different door opening into the house of a woman's life. Something of womanhood's infinite variety is more distinctly revealed through her maternal dignity and goodness. *"There was no mother like my mother!"* How the generations of mankind have reverently voiced this sentiment! And we feel,

somehow, that all men and women have the God-given right to so speak of their mothers. It is here that humanity's feet are jubilantly set upon one of the old heart-trails, always fresh and green and fragrant, which unfailingly lead to the springs of the Infinite Goodness. That is why we kindle with respect for souls, out of all ages and climes and conditions of life, who gratefully utter this heaven-inspired and universal privilege: *"There was no mother like my mother!"* Even now, this moment, you men and women, busy with memories rooted in your yesteryears, are saying just what the generations of sons and daughters have said about their mothers. And thus you do well and wisely; it is a mark of human nature's diviner side; it is what the God and Father of us all would have us say.

So, it is not strange that this daughter a ' son, remembering with tears of gratitude their own beautiful and gracious and patient mother, are saying in their heart of hearts: *"There was no mother like my mother!"* For they, too, like that unnumbered multitude the ages long, have been turning in from childhood and maturity to the House of Motherhood, wherein lived this modern great woman, to eat the bread of comfort, sympathy, and unselfishness, sweetly seasoned by her unforgetable mother-love.

Furthermore, Mrs. Sunny was great in her philanthropy. As we know, the term comes from two Greek words which signify love of mankind as expressed in deeds of practical beneficence. Here, again, in the light of Christianity, we are in league with quality and not quantity, with motive and not matter, with goodness and not gold. What I mean is somewhat clarified by recalling those two classic illustrations found in the New Testament. The first is that of the poor widow, who had but two mites to give; but she gave them heartily, soulfully—even all that

she had. The others gave out of their abundance—and there is no criticism of abundance, if rightly administered; but in the case of the others, little or no sacrificial, loving spirit accompanied their gifts. Now the point is this: The widow, poor in property, was nevertheless so rich in soul, in the spirit of true philanthropy, that her two mites overtook and outweighed the larger material gifts of her more prosperous fellow-worshipers. Thus, in very truth, the poet is right—the gift without the giver is bare! The second illustration comes from St. Paul. He says, in that chapter which mankind can neither forget nor outgrow: "If I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing." Is it not a rather serious thing to be able to give away even millions and at the same time be faced with the possibility of being credited, in the end of things, with only a row of ciphers—nothing?

Now, the spirit of Christian philanthropy makes such a tragedy impossible. It cannot be measured by big things or little; it is not accountable to things at all; rather is it the master, the soul of things, which commands things, great or small, to do its bidding, and so have part in the immeasurable generosity of God. So I measure my words in saying that Mrs. Sunny was great in her philanthropy; she was a lover of humanity; and while there was no trace of class-consciousness in her, she yearned over the poor, the unfortunate, and her heart, like the Master's, went out to the last, the least, and the lost. Consequently, she was interested in every good work in Chicago. In her days of health, she was one of the most faithful helpers in the women's work of Central Church, as she was one of the chief supporters of the Central Church Kindergarten. Her interest in these, as well as in other agencies of beneficence, continued to the last. Essen-

tially Christian herself, the spirit of goodness shed the glow of goodness over all her works. She breathed forth the aroma of helpfulness even as a rose distils fragrance upon the air.

Nor must I fail to emphasize that Mrs. Sunny was also great in her sufferings. Suffering is a part of our human lot. Most of us, while passing through this world, experience some kind of suffering. But while most people are great sufferers, it is not true, unfortunately, that most exhibit the spirit of greatness in their sufferings. This is not strange, because suffering is one of the severest tests to which human beings are subjected. Is it not more or less human for the majority of us to fail in the examination prepared by mental and bodily pain? And so it comes to pass that many suffer greatly who are not great in and through their sufferings. But our friend manifested the spirit of Christian greatness in the crucial test applied to her. I have been made to wonder at her courage, her optimism, her thought of others, her unmurmuring endurance of the cup of suffering from which she drank. Some pass through the deep waters of affliction only to come out on the other side embittered, hardened, and rebellious. Others entering the same engulfing stream with strong crying and tears, it may be, but who, nevertheless, emerge on the fairer, brighter side of pain's mysterious river with souls greatly enriched and a far deeper understanding of life than when they stood trembling upon the uninviting brink. To this latter class, it seems to me, did Mrs. Sunny rightfully belong. Without any inclination to say unwise or untrue things about the glory of suffering for suffering's sake—only shallow natures do that; yet, when the trial came, she faced it with fortitude and nobility, coming forth more than conqueror throught the Love that would not, and could not, let her go!

II

I said a moment ago that this should be a Christian service. Therefore, we must not think entirely of what she was; for God's past tenses are but gloriously prophetic of His present and future tenses of being. Thus it is our privilege to think, also, of what she is and of where she is. As she was not a dogmatist, it would be unbecoming of me to speak in the spirit of mere dogmatism now. But because this service should be one of commemoration, consolation, and inspiration, we have a right to what George Meredith called "the rapture of the forward view." Let us exchange, for a moment, the past tense for the present tense.

First, then, I think she is one of God's crowned souls. Very beautiful is that old promise of the seer: "Be thou faithful unto death; and I will give thee the crown of life." What a figure! The idea of a crown came into human speech because it seemed to suggest what is very desirable—a throne, royalty, authority, kingliness, queenliness. So the word has come to have various usages, as, for example, the crown of joy, the crown of wealth, the crown of wisdom, the crown of victory. But here, surely, is one of the loftiest and most satisfying usages of the term—*the crown of life!* Why, that is the ultimate and absolute goal of the human, is it not? As Tennyson said, it is more life and fuller, that we want. What we call death is just the crowned soul's way of coming into the fuller realization of that which it instinctively craves and longs for. Faithful unto death—through all the days and all the ways—fidelity is the key that opens the door to the crown-room of the King of kings and Lord of lords! She was greatly faithful; many turned in to partake of the nutritious food she prepared with loving, loyal hands. Therefore, I cannot think of her as having ceased to be; rather am I compelled to think that she has simply gone on to her coronation.

Furthermore, I think of her as being great in her new vision and environment. Like all of us, she saw only in part while in the body; now she sees more fully and understands more perfectly. Is not that at once Christian and satisfying? Every day we seem to be coming, even through science and discovery, into a larger understanding of the exceedingly sensitive universe in which we live. There is reason to believe that the cosmos itself is essentially spiritual. The new and most startling world-wonder is radiography. Last Sunday in Central Church I preached not only to those in the visible congregation before me; but there were invisible auditors—some of them hundreds of miles away—who heard my voice quite distinctly. Last night I listened, in one of the upper rooms of this home, to voices of singers and melodies of musicians whom I could not see. Man, working with and through matter, has learned how to make it do his bidding in a marvelous fashion. He is increasingly disengaging spirit from matter; but the disengaging process could not go steadily and surprisingly on, if spirit were not already in, over, and above matter. Here is an eye; but before there was an organ for sight, there must have been sight itself in the universe. Here is an ear; but before there was an organ for hearing, there must have been hearing itself in the universe. Here is a brain; but before there was an instrument for thought, there must have been thought itself in the universe. Is it not much easier to accept this as a fact, however inadequately expressed, than it is to conclude that all this wonderful something came out of nothing?

So we are gathered here in this beautiful home. Human love built this home in the hope that this beloved wife and mother might come back and live here among us for many years. She did not come, as we had fondly hoped and dreamed, to this earthly home prepared by love. Is it unreasonable to think that she has lovingly entered the House not made by

hands, eternal, in the heavens? The soul says there ought to be a place like that; and God in Christ says that there is such a place and such a home. "In My Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you." That is why I reverently dare to say that she is great in her coronation, having been given the crown of life; that she is great in her vision, seeing more perfectly than was possible while here in the body; that she is great in her new environment, being a dweller in the Home prepared by Infinite Love. So as we go to Rose Hill, I want these dear and bereft ones, in particular, to partake of the commemorative, consoling, inspiring memories and hopes of their beloved wife and mother, our beautiful friend and fellow-worker in the Kingdom of God.

No, not cold beneath the grasses,
Not close-walled within the tomb;
Rather, in our Father's mansion,
Living in another room.

Living, like the man who loves me,
Like my child with cheeks abloom,
Out of sight, at desk or school-book,
Busy in another room.

Nearer than my son whom fortune
Beckons where the strange lands loom;
Just behind the hanging curtain,
Serving in another room.

Shall I doubt my Father's mercy?
Shall I think of death as doom,
Or the stepping o'er the threshold
To a bigger, brighter room?

Shall I blame my Father's wisdom?
Shall I sit enswathed in gloom,
When I know my loves are happy,
Waiting in the other room?

DATE DUE

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